

Powerful Social Studies

for Elementary Students

JERE BROPHY, JANET ALLEMAN & ANNE-LISE HALVORSEN



THIRD EDITION

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Standards Integration

InTASC Principles		NCSS Themes ¹
Chapter 1	Standard #1: Learner Development Standard #8: Instructional Strategies	
Chapter 2	Standard #1: Learner Development Standard #2: Learning Differences Standard #3: Learning Environments Standard #7: Planning for Instruction Standard #8: Instructional Strategies	5. Individuals, Groups, and Institutions
Chapter 3	Standard #4: Content Knowledge Standard #5: Application of Content Standard #7: Planning for Instruction	
Chapter 4	Standard #4: Content Knowledge Standard #5: Application of Content Standard #6: Assessment Standard #7: Planning for Instruction Standard #8: Instructional Strategies	
Chapter 5	Standard #4: Content Knowledge Standard #5: Application of Content Standard #7: Planning for Instruction Standard #8: Instructional Strategies	2. Time, Continuity, and Change
Chapter 6	Standard #4: Content Knowledge Standard #5: Application of Content Standard #7: Planning for Instruction Standard #8: Instructional Strategies	1. Culture and Cultural Diversity 3. People, Places, and Environments 9. Global Connections
Chapter 7	Standard #4: Content Knowledge Standard #5: Application of Content Standard #7: Planning for Instruction Standard #8: Instructional Strategies	4. Individual Development and Identity 5. Individuals, Groups, and Institutions 6. Power, Authority, and Governance 7. Production, Distribution, and Consumption 10. Civic Ideals and Practices
Chapter 8	Standard #3: Learning Environments Standard #4: Content Knowledge Standard #5: Application of Content Standard #6: Assessment Standard #7: Planning for Instruction Standard #8: Instructional Strategies	10. Civic Ideals and Practices
Chapter 9	Standard #2: Learning Differences Standard #6: Assessment Standard #8: Instructional Strategies	
Chapter 10	Standard #5: Application of Content Standard #6: Assessment Standard #7: Planning for Instruction Standard #8: Instructional Strategies	
Chapter 11	Standard #2: Learning Differences Standard #5: Application of Content Standard #7: Planning for Instruction Standard #8: Instructional Strategies	
Chapter 12	Standard #5: Application of Content Standard #6: Assessment Standard #7: Planning for Instruction Standard #8: Instructional Strategies	8. Science, Technology, and Society
Chapter 13	Standard #5: Application of Content Standard #6: Assessment Standard #7: Planning for Instruction Standard #8: Instructional Strategies	5. Individuals, Groups, and Institutions

Chapter 14

Standard #1: Learner Development	
Standard #2: Learning Differences	
Standard #3: Learning Environments	
Standard #4: Content Knowledge	
Standard #5: Application of Content	
Standard #6: Assessment	
Standard #7: Planning for Instruction	
Standard #8: Instructional Strategies	
Standard #9: Professional Learning and Ethical Practice	
Standard #10: Leadership and Collaboration	

¹Here we list the NCSS Themes that have particular relevance to the chapters. However, please note that all of the NCSS Themes are interwoven throughout the book, often through examples from practice.



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*In memory of Jere Brophy and in honor of his wife Arlene Brophy.
In memory of George Trumbull.*

A stylized graphic of a globe, showing the continents of North and South America in white against a teal background. It is positioned in the top left corner of the page.

About the Authors

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Preface

This book is intended for preservice and inservice elementary teachers and for social studies teacher educators. It offers a perspective on the nature and functions of elementary social studies and presents principles and illustrative examples designed to help teachers plan social studies instruction that is coherently organized and powerful in producing desired student outcomes. It offers in-depth treatment of selected issues that we consider crucial for teachers to work through if they are to develop powerful social studies programs in their classrooms.

The book is designed to accomplish two primary purposes. First, we seek to help elementary teachers develop a clear sense of social studies as a coherent school subject organized to accomplish social understanding and civic efficacy goals. Teachers need to understand the nature and purposes of social studies in order to plan and teach the subject effectively.

Second, we seek to prepare elementary teachers to identify significant social studies education goals that are appropriate for their students and then use these goals to guide them in their planning by selecting content, developing it through classroom discourse, integrating a range of instructional strategies, and using it in authentic application activities and assessments. To illustrate the application of our suggested guidelines, the book includes extended examples in the form of detailed plans for topically organized curricular units structured around powerful ideas. In addition, the book addresses assessment, curricular integration, and homework as they apply to social studies teaching, and it suggests ways to encourage classes of students to function as learning communities engaged in the social construction of knowledge.

Outline of Chapters and Changes

The third edition retains the most enduring and important content from the previous two editions (although in reshaped form), updates that material to incorporate the significant events and latest research of the last few years, and includes a reordering of some chapters and combining of Chapters 3 and 4 based on preservice and inservice feedback. We have designed a number of new tables and figures to illustrate the points we make in the text. Some of the major reshaping features include a revision of Chapter 1 to include several curricular and instructional approaches currently being implemented in classrooms, an expanded Chapter 2 to focus more attention to teaching diverse learners, and an expanded chapter on discourse (Chapter 8) that incorporates that latest research, particularly on facilitating discussion. Another feature of this edition is the explicit attention given to the 12 principles of good teaching that serve as a foundation for this text. Each chapter highlights one or more of the principles, with Chapter 14 bringing them all together and reiterating how collectively they serve to make social studies as well as other content areas powerful and memorable.

A host of other changes, additions, and enhancements related to the content are reflected in our third edition. In an attempt to make the text more reader-friendly, we

have included a number of “text-boxes” that feature questions for reflection and technology tips. We have collected and included updated photographs representing content “in action.” As authors, we encourage you and your students to carefully study the table of contents prior to reading any of the chapters. Our intent is that the levels of detail provided there will serve as a roadmap for finding where specific topics are covered.

The third edition features an instructor’s manual written by the authors. We offer it simply as another tool. The contents of the manual, including the suggested in-class activities, represent our experiences in making *Powerful Social Studies for Elementary Students* come to life for our college students.

Our book reflects recent classroom research on teaching school subjects for understanding, appreciation, and application. It also reflects position statements by the National Council for the Social Studies concerning the purposes and goals of social studies as a school subject and the principles involved in teaching it with coherence and power. Finally, although it deals in depth with fundamental issues, the book casts teachers in the role of key decision makers in planning, implementing, and assessing powerful social studies instruction. It encourages teachers to be proactive in identifying suitable social studies goals for their students, in adapting or supplementing the content, questions, and activities that their textbook series offer, and in drawing upon local resources (including the students’ home cultures and personal experiences) as sources of content and sites for application of social studies learning. Teachers who study the book thoughtfully will gain from it clear conceptions for the nature and purposes of social studies teaching with social understanding and civic efficacy goals in mind.

We begin Chapter 1 by characterizing the nature of social studies as a school subject organized to support students’ progress toward social understanding and civic efficacy goals. We offer descriptions of several curricular and instructional approaches that show the range of ways social studies educators teach the subject. We also describe the traditional sequence used for elementary social studies: the expanding communities.

Chapter 2 addresses the professional development concerns of most teachers that involve classroom community, management, and student motivation. We have expanded the treatment of motivation, included a new section on diverse learners, expanded the section on group work, and retained the section on establishing a learning community. The childhood unit has been retained in an effort to help readers understand and appreciate the ways that generic management and motivation principles can be implemented within particular subject matter contexts and embrace the range of learner assets, interests, experiences, and abilities.

Chapter 3 combines two chapters from the second edition on goal-oriented planning and selecting and representing content. We combined these chapters because determining goals and selecting and representing content go hand-in-hand. When social studies instruction is focused on important topics, and when topics are developed with an emphasis on powerful ideas, the result is a coherent social studies program. The principles emphasized in this combined chapter are applied within the context of developing a unit on government found in Appendix A.

At the urging of preservice teachers, we have introduced the chapter on planning earlier in the newest edition. It was Chapter 14 in the second edition of the book and is now Chapter 4. It emphasizes how elementary social studies, more than most other subjects, requires a lot of independent planning and decision making on the part of teachers in order to create powerful teaching. We show how good planning begins with establishing powerful goals, big ideas, and content before designing activities and selecting resources. It then introduces the tools available to teachers as they carry out these responsibilities (standards, textbooks, supplemental materials, trade books, children’s literature,

the Internet, and so forth), and develops principles for using these tools productively to generate or adapt instruction to meet the needs of one's students. In subsequent chapters an expanded understanding of these tools will become apparent. (See also Appendix A.)

A great deal of the content taught in social studies is drawn from the disciplines of history, geography, and the social sciences. The third edition maintains attention to issues and strategies involved in selecting and teaching content drawn from these disciplines and expands its emphasis on skills unique to each of them. Chapter 5 characterizes the nature of history, describes it, identifies places where historical content is typically taught in the elementary grades, and presents findings from research on developments in children's historical knowledge and thinking. The chapter describes issues surrounding historical content and pedagogy, introduces national standards for history teaching, and offers guidelines for, and examples of, effective history content and activities.

Chapter 6 offers similar coverage of geography and anthropology (grouped together because they share a focus on culture). Chapter 7 addresses the rest of the social sciences (psychology, sociology, economics, and civics and government). The length and composition of our treatment of each of these disciplines varies with the available scholarly literature and the extent of their presence within the elementary social studies curriculum. At minimum, however, our treatment addresses development in children's knowledge and thinking about content related to the discipline, the National Council for the Social Studies Curriculum Standards (NCSS), and other national standards (if available) for teaching content drawn from the discipline, and guidelines for effective lessons and activities.

Chapter 8 is expanded to consider the full range of students' construction of meaning through listening, speaking, reading, and writing experiences, and includes such new features as sections on discussion and ways of assessing it. Here and elsewhere, the book emphasizes the importance of planning instruction to connect to students' prior knowledge, both building on valid understandings and addressing misconceptions.

Chapter 9, which was Chapter 12 in the second edition of the book, now focuses on assessment and has been strategically repositioned in the text to underscore the importance of addressing it throughout the planning process (it comes prior to the chapters on strategies and activities). The chapter in this edition is an expansion on assessment, giving more attention to authenticity, including the use of student work. It also discusses issues of validity as it relates to assessment and describes how to design and use rubrics to communicate expectations to students and to evaluate performance.

Chapter 10 focuses on strategies, expanding coverage to include lecturettes, demonstration/modeling, investigation of primary historical sources, and inquiry. Chapter 11 describes various instructional activities and the criteria by which to select them for teaching powerful social studies in your classroom. These chapters introduce appreciation for the unique advantages that alternative formats offer, but at the same time continue to emphasize that strategies and activities are not ends in themselves, but vehicles for accomplishing curricular goals. In this edition we inverted the order of Chapters 10 and 11; our logic being that strategies are teaching approaches such as storytelling, the case method, simulation, and so forth, whereas activities refer to the full range of classroom tasks that students are expected to do in order to learn, apply, practice, or evaluate, or in any way respond to the curriculum content embedded in the strategy. For example, an economics lesson on decision making could be presented using case method and the activity for processing the content might be "table talk."

Chapter 12, previously Chapter 11, expands the second edition's chapter on curricular integration to view the topic in the light of recent developments of state standards and benchmarks (often now called content expectations) as well as suggests guidelines for selecting and using children's literature and technology resources as instructional

materials for social studies. This edition reveals the potential value of literacy and other subject areas in promoting the meaningfulness of social studies. In addition to cautioning readers against unproductive forms of curricular integration—a trap so easy to fall into when trying to seek more time to cover content in multiple areas—the chapter offers guidelines for making decisions regarding effective integration.

Chapter 13 is the former Chapter 14. It emphasizes the importance of student assets that include bringing students' home cultures into the classroom as the ideal way to address diversity and multicultural issues. It also shows how social studies curriculum can be extended into the home and community through assignments that engage students in communicating about and constructing understandings of social studies content through interactions with family and community members. Unlike conventional homework, these assignments encourage family involvement and are designed to generate discussions and produce data that can contemporize the in-school curriculum. Our hope is that students will find the learning opportunities informative, meaningful, and enjoyable.

Chapter 14, previously Chapter 15, serves as the foundation for our text. It looks back at the approach to powerful elementary social studies developed throughout the book and considers it with reference to two potential sets of guidelines for instructional planning: the recent emphasis on high stakes testing in some content areas that has culminated into state and federal legislation and the research on effective teaching for understanding, appreciation, and life application that has developed over the last 50 years. The chapter characterizes the former as counterproductive and the latter as the key to powerful teaching of all school subjects (not just social studies). This chapter offers a synthesis of these research findings, organized around 12 principles that comprise a network of powerful ideas within which to subsume most of the principles and strategies recommended in the text as a whole. A new addition is a chart at the end of this chapter that indicates what chapters highlight which principles and includes examples of what the principle looks like in practice.

Features

Teacher Voice and Photographs

The chapters begin with comments by novice and experienced teachers who share their views on the content developed in the chapters. We also include photographs that feature the applications of the chapter's content in practice. These have been updated for this edition.

Reflection Questions

Reflection questions are included throughout the chapters. They are designed to help readers assimilate and apply the main ideas and guidelines, whether through their own independent reflection or through in-class discussion with peers.

Technology Tips

A new feature of this edition is a Technology Tips box that provides suggestions for using technology effectively and meaningfully to develop and teach social studies units and lessons.

TeachSource Videos

Where relevant, we have suggested videos that accompany the content in the chapter and provide a picture of actual teaching situations and challenges. They can be accessed in the Education Media Library at cengagebrain.com.



Research Base Boxes

Each chapter highlights principles of good teaching in a Research Base box, which are indicated by the symbol of a puzzle piece (when all the pieces of the principles of good teaching are put in place, powerful teaching results). These principles serve to make social studies, as well as other content areas, powerful and meaningful.

Your Turn

The chapters end with a Your Turn section in which readers are invited to apply the chapter's key understandings to scenarios involving planning for teaching.



NCSS Icon

The 2010 National Council for the Social Studies Curriculum Standards have been incorporated throughout the text and a new icon designates areas where they are discussed or exemplified.

Ancillaries

Finally, more material from instructional units developed by authors is included as examples, and mostly woven throughout the chapters. Additionally, based on recommendations from our students, the two resource units focusing on popular unit topics are retained in this edition and are included as appendices. As noted previously, material related to the development of a powerful unit on government is included as Appendix A and suggested to accompany the planning chapter.

To the Instructor

We have reorganized this revision based on the recommendation of our preservice and inservice teachers, with the planning chapter coming much earlier in the book. We encourage you to assign chapters in a different order if that is better suited to your style and organizational scheme. We also encourage you to take your cues from your preservice and inservice teachers. Embracing their ideas can make all the difference! A revised instructor's manual written by the authors accompanies this revision. Consider reviewing the manual prior to designing your syllabus, as there might be some suggested activities you will want to incorporate into your assignments that warrant scores/grades.

To the Student

To be successful in using our text, we encourage you to begin by studying the table of contents carefully. Feel free to read any chapter or section before it is assigned. The chapters are arranged in an order that makes sense to us; however, you might have a different organizational scheme. For example, if you want to learn more about NCSS Curriculum Standards early in the course, we encourage you to turn to Chapter 4. If integration comes up in an early discussion as a means of finding time for social studies, skip to Chapter 12 to learn about our perspective.

View the "Your Turn" sections as opportunities to apply what you are reading and discussing in class. Some of you will be taking a course that uses this text early in your teacher education sequence while others will be using it during student teaching or an internship, or as part of a graduate program. If you have your own classroom, it will be easy to do the activities we suggest. However, it's not the end of the world if you don't have your own students. We recommend that you observe social studies teaching even if it is not a course requirement. Practice doing the exercises, including the design of units, either for hypothetical students or for those in one of the classes you observe. Share your work. Often, classroom teachers will offer you the opportunity to co-teach or to serve as guest instructor.

Our hope is that you will apply what you are learning throughout the course. Your engagement with the content and the suggested activities will make the experiences much more memorable.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. How do you view your textbook?

Our book, not unlike any other textbook for students or teachers, is not intended to be a single source. While it might be the only social studies text you are asked to purchase, we encourage our readers to expand their repertoire of perspectives by locating articles and books referenced at the ends of chapters, searching the Internet, reviewing selections suggested by other professionals, and so on. We hope it provides a useful resource well beyond the teacher preparation program, serving as a guide for both new and experienced teachers alike. Chapter 14 provides an in-depth explanation of the 12 principles of good teaching that apply across the content areas, along with a chart that illustrates what the principles look like in a social studies setting. We hope it will serve as a springboard and guide as you launch your daily practice.

2. What does your text offer teachers in the early grades?

We are convinced that children have untapped capacity. Our research on children's thinking about cultural universals, for example, has been encouraging and eye opening. It suggests, for example, that these are viable topics for young children. Their interest surrounding these topics is high, but they lack networks of connected knowledge and possess lots of misconceptions. Other researchers have found other similar patterns. Knowing about how children think about social studies topics can help teachers both to connect with and build on their accurate prior knowledge and to address their misconceptions. This revision includes several curricular and instructional approaches for your consideration. We encourage you to go beyond the textbook, become an entrepreneur, and combine approaches for a truly robust program.

The text provides K–3 teachers with expanded and more sophisticated approaches to social studies. We promote depth over breadth and also use of a range of activities, strategies, assessments, and out-of-school learning opportunities with an eye always on the goals and big ideas.

3. What does this book offer for grades 4–6 teachers?

Typically, the curriculum at these levels is overloaded with content that is fractured and factually dense. We promote depth over breadth and emphasize big ideas, offering several curricular and instructional approaches. We provide lots of examples for making the content more authentic, with questions and activities that enable students to connect what they are learning to their lives outside of school.

We include an explanation, laced with examples, illustrating the importance of balancing and shifting between teaching and learning during the instructional process. While this is obviously necessary in the early grades, we view it as necessary at all levels. We advocate teacher modeling, facilitating, and debriefing opportunities using a host of strategies, activities, assessments, and home assignments, always with an eye on the goals and big ideas.

4. Why do you provide separate chapters on history and geography/anthropology but cluster all the other social science disciplines within a single chapter?

The literature is much more highly developed in history, geography, economics, and civics/government than in psychology, anthropology, or sociology (as applied to elementary social studies). Also, some of these areas are emphasized more within the elementary curriculum than others. In any case, we promote a pandisciplinary approach that features holistic study of unit topics. In designing a unit on the

community, for example, we would begin with the local community and study its history, its geography within the five themes, past and present economic conditions, its political or governmental structure, and sociological aspects such as the roles of community members in their work, as citizens, and so on.

5. How are you treating multicultural education in this text?

We take the term *multicultural* to refer not to a separate topic or set of lessons but to pervade all aspects of powerful social studies teaching. It begins with establishing a learning community that celebrates diversity as an asset and reaches out to students' families and home cultures. It implies that history will be taught with attention paid to multiple perspectives on significant events and the stories of people whose histories are often ignored. It assumes teaching about regions, countries, states, and other locations, with attention focused on their cultures along with their geographic and economic characteristics. More generally, it means teaching social studies topics in ways that help students come to understand local and familiar practices within global and multicultural perspectives that "make the strange familiar" and "make the familiar strange." Finally, we highlight human activities related to cultural universals because it facilitates teaching with a focus on commonalities rather than differences. This emphasis can be applied not only to the lower grades but woven into studies of states and regions in the upper grades. This promotes empathy and helps redirect children's tendencies toward presentism in thinking about the past and chauvinism in thinking about other cultures.

6. How is technology treated in your textbook?

Throughout our book, we reference websites that fit naturally with the content. We encourage teachers to use technology when it matches the goals and enhances the development of the big ideas within the unit, but caution against technology-based activities that lack goal relevance or cost-effectiveness. The guiding principles for selecting, implementing, and evaluating activities emphasized in Chapter 11 apply as much to technology-based activities as to more conventional activities. The instructor's manual provides additional sources. A new feature of the third edition is "Technology Tips," whereby in each chapter we provide suggestions for websites or technological tools to enhance your social studies teaching.

7. Why is there so much more attention given to units than to individual lessons?

We are proponents of depth of development of powerful ideas over breadth of coverage. We want to illustrate for the reader the value of networks of connected knowledge structured around powerful ideas that can be learned with understanding and retained in ways that make them accessible for application. In contrast, disconnected bits of information presented as isolated lessons are likely to be learned only through low-level processes such as rote memorization.

8. What are your views on assessment?

We view assessment as an integral part of ongoing teaching and learning. Different forms and times for assessment should be determined by the purpose of the learning situation, the kind of information acquired, and how it will be used to accomplish social studies goals. Learning activities play an important role, as they are both curriculum components that need to be assessed as such and mechanisms for eliciting indicators of student learning.

Currently, teachers are faced with many obligations, responsibilities, and frustrations regarding assessment. To aid with these challenges, we acknowledge, describe, and provide examples to illustrate how state and national standards can inform instructional planning. Chapter 9 features guidelines for designing paper-and-pencil tools as well as a range of informal measures. Special attention is given to authentic instruments for serving our diverse learners.

9. How much attention do you give to inquiry?

We describe inquiry teaching in Chapter 10 and include examples that draw on this approach throughout our book. Inquiry can be effective for introducing new topics, processing information, and constructing/deconstructing knowledge. It also can be valuable for promoting curiosity and engaging learners in the instructional process. The key is for the teacher to “rein in” multiple responses in order to promote understanding of the big ideas and at the same time promote further investigation.

10. What role does literacy play?

Literacy is threaded throughout the textbook and is emphasized in Chapters 8 and 12. While we are well aware that social studies is often justified because of its literacy connections, our intent is to provide a text that emphasizes subject-matter knowledge and uses reading, writing, speaking, and listening for developing that content. We recommend that literacy skills be taught during instruction time allocated for that subject and then used during social studies time to serve social education goals.

We encourage the use of authentic children’s literature, including informational texts and we provide chapters on discourse and integration that shed further light on the importance of literacy. Chapter 12 offers guidelines for making decisions regarding effective integration.

11. How do you think about social action within the elementary social studies program?

We view social action and service learning as integral parts of the elementary social studies program and important parts of developing citizenship. Social action and service learning activities should match the goals and big ideas of the unit and be authentic and appropriate for the grade level.

Social action and service learning initiatives also promote self-efficacy. There is nothing more satisfying for a child than feeling she or he is making a difference. Service learning as an instructional approach is described in Chapter 1. Lessons within the shelter and government units and examples described in Chapter 13 focusing on home-school connections illustrate social action possibilities for the elementary grades.

12. How do you suggest social studies be given the instructional attention it deserves?

With emphasis placed on literacy and mathematics in the elementary grades, most recently as a result of the mandates of the No Child Left Behind Act, time for social studies in the elementary school day is in jeopardy. We recognize this dilemma (it is particularly acute for teachers in low socioeconomic settings due to the pressures associated with testing), and in Chapters 8 and 12 (and elsewhere throughout the book) we suggest ways that social studies can be integrated into other subjects in a way that preserves rich social education goals. We encourage you to leverage real-life situations and embrace out-of-school time for engaging and powerful social studies lessons. Incorporating authentic homework into your practice may be the best-kept secret for keeping social studies alive, motivating students, and involving families—keys to higher achievement.



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ELEMENTARY SOCIAL STUDIES: What Is It? What Might It Become?

TEACHER VOICE

Dominic Knighten, Teaching Intern

In order to support my claim on how this textbook has opened my eyes to not only teaching but the art of successfully teaching social studies, I have to first paint the picture of my approach to teacher education course textbooks prior to this one. The books were—well, let’s just say books. They were required textbooks on the course syllabus that I would purchase and place to the side, with no anticipation to crack open, unless the dreaded word “quiz” was to arise. I assumed that any information I needed to retain would be provided during class discussion. With this mentality I began my senior year with this “social studies” course as the first on my agenda. Social Studies? How am I supposed to teach social studies, I would ask myself, as I looked at my course schedule, dreading that first session. Our first meeting came and we talked about how the term “social studies” encompasses so much more than I initially believed. I found out it included history, economics, geography, psychology, anthropology, political science, and so forth. My mind raced with concern about my ability to

teach social studies as the professor described the range of instructional strategies that will be addressed in the course. How can I do this? Is teaching really the career for me? I was constantly asking myself such questions those first few weeks of class. There is more to it than having kids read out of their textbook.

Admittedly, I was glad to see that Brophy, Alleman, and Halvorsen validated my dissatisfaction with the traditional social studies textbook as the sole informational source. While reading about the various curricular and instructional approaches make much more sense than

what I remember experiencing, I still wasn't convinced that social studies was very important—or that I could possibly make social studies instruction for my students very engaging until my professor gave us an assignment called “Social Studies Is Everywhere.” Initially—and I won't lie—I thought it was one more example of busy work! Boy was I wrong!

The professor indicated that the overall goals were to understand and appreciate the world through a social studies lens, to make meaning, and to experience memorable learning in ways heretofore not imagined. Thank goodness we, as a class, brainstormed ideas before we set out on this adventure. I remained hesitant until I landed my idea and launched into the experience.

Since my girlfriend and I were getting a dog and the related decisions would consume a big chunk of time, why not use that? I won't bore you with the details, but I will confess the learning experience was awesome. We had to locate the Humane Society (geography), buy all the animal supplies including food, feeding dish, dog collar, and sweater, and pay the veterinarian for shots (economics), follow the regulations established by the apartment's management for having a pet (political science), and so forth. It was astounding and never ending. Believe me; I was pumped to share my experience with my peers. Guess what! I got to the next class session early! All of our stories were unique—and each seemed to be more compelling than the previous one. Examples ranged from opportunity costs (Do I go camping on the weekend or stay home and study?), planning a parent's milestone birthday party (history), having wisdom teeth pulled and figuring out where the food and drugs consumed during the misery came from (geography), and so forth.

Somewhere in the middle of our class session, it struck me like a ton of bricks. Social studies really does explain how the world works! What could be more important? It really is everywhere! Who cares if the textbooks are very limited? It doesn't excuse me from writing off social studies! I have come to realize authentic examples of social studies are unlimited! For me social studies has gone from the least liked and least important to the top of my list.

While it sounds corny, I encourage you to do the social studies is everywhere exercise – even if the professor doesn't assign it. I promise you, you'll never again say social studies is boring – and besides, finally as an adult, you'll figure out what it is!

Don't let your fears hold you back from cracking open this book, or the belief that this is “just another college textbook.” It is much more than that! It's the first step to helping you make social studies come to life in the classroom and opening up the minds and imaginations of students! Motivation is the heart of the matter!

Social studies is the hardest thing you could ever ask me to explain. I guess social studies is a class where you learn about different things that happen around the world, and do reports on stuff that happens around the world, or things like that.

(A fifth grader quoted by Stodolsky, Salk, & Glaessner, 1991, p. 98)

When I first started teaching social studies to young children, five-, six-, and seven-year-olds, I felt like I needed to start by explaining and defining social studies to them. To do that well, I began with some very broad, general definitions. Literacy is learning about words and letters and how they work to help people share ideas. Math is learning about numbers and shapes and how to solve problems with them. Science is learning about the things in the world around us. Social studies is learning about people and the world we've created to live in.

When you think about people, social studies includes groups of people, how they live together, their needs and the rules that help them to survive. It includes learning about the culture and traditions of people as well as the places that they live. Social studies also encompasses the world around us as it relates to how people live, how they've adjusted to their environment as well as how they've changed the world to meet their own needs. We learn all of these things in the context of the present day as well as learning about people who have lived in the past and speculating about those who will live in the future. Throughout all of these discussions and lessons the focus is on the logic of it all, making sense of the decisions individuals and groups have made. At its most basic level, social studies is figuring out why people do what they do everyday and making sense of the world.

*Therefore, if we are expecting our students to be productive and contributing members of society in the future, we **must** teach social studies so that they can learn how the world works. Without social studies, students fail to understand and have an appreciation for the lives and decision making of others. Students with a strong social studies education can begin to understand how people are alike and develop a broader understanding of why people in other countries, cultures, and religions are different and appreciate those differences. With our world becoming smaller due to globalization, this is a crucial skill to begin to develop early on.*

(A fourth-grade teacher)

To me, social studies does not always occur in a predetermined 30- or 45-minute block of time during the day. Instead, social studies experiences that motivate my students to greater understanding often expand the required "basics" by integrating multiple subjects, utilizing learning possibilities outside of school, and valuing students as necessary contributors to the curriculum. Social studies is an opportunity for me to genuinely connect my students' personal and collective concerns, questions, and interests about their lives to the wider concerns, questions, and interests of our community. These connections between self and world are often described in social studies standards, but I value the real social studies teaching and learning as the unique process of making generic, but important, content become worthwhile and exciting in the minds of my students. The purpose of social studies is to provide a goal-oriented sequence for students and classrooms to:

- 1. Become aware of current or past social issues or problems;*
- 2. Investigate these social studies concepts by employing and being deliberate in using specific inquiry skills, such as asking questions, identifying problems, collecting data, etc.;*
- 3. Take action with their learning by creating a product or*

service for others that demonstrates their increased social studies understanding. Social studies should give students the chance to assert themselves and their thinking in the context of something real, but real as defined by the students, [to realize] the impact of their new knowledge on their lives, and to [increase] their efforts to want to learn more.

(A fourth-grade teacher)

Quite simply, social studies education helps students understand the world around them. Not the physical world as science does; rather the relationships, people, and systems that surround and impact their everyday lives. At the youngest grades, social studies is the first content area that pushes students to look beyond themselves and past their egocentric sensibilities. For the first time, young learners look at their families, schools, and communities and begin to see themselves as a part of something bigger. As this awareness spreads past their doorstep and beyond their classroom walls, it becomes the building blocks for nurturing the next generation of citizens, leaders, problem solvers, and thinkers. By focusing on the connections among people, places, and systems, social studies education allows students to make sense of a very complex world and gives them the tools to make positive changes today, tomorrow, and long into their futures.

(A second-grade teacher)

Social studies is a way to connect every discipline. It allows us to explain who we are and why we are here—what problems we have now and how we might look to the past to explore solutions and steer away from potential land mines. Social studies is such a rich area for understanding and exploring language and culture, but also numbers and science and music and logic. It allows students who might not succeed in other subjects to be creative and demonstrate their ability to master complex material in unique ways.

(A fifth-grade teacher)

Social studies is an ongoing process by which students learn about the world around them and how they are a part of it. They learn about how their interactions with others and the environment, as well as the decisions they make, affect the world they live in by studying the major focus areas of the subject. I believe that the major purpose of the social studies is to teach students how to make decisions that promote the values of our democratic society; moreover, how to critically think and make rational, informed decisions that will positively affect their lives and the lives of others. Social studies is nothing if there is no life application.

(A fifth-grade teacher)

As these quotes illustrate, there is a common belief that social studies education is about making sense of what happens in the world. Beyond that commonality, however, there are varying views about social studies and its nature as a school subject. Lacking a clear sense of social education purposes and goals, many teachers are uncertain about how

to teach social studies (Thornton, 2005). Often they downgrade its importance in the curriculum or offer fragmented programs because they select activities for convenience or student interest rather than for their value as a means of accomplishing clearly formulated social education goals. Such confusion is readily understandable. The history of social studies has been marked by ongoing debates over the nature, scope, and definition of the field (Armento, 1993; Evans, 2004; Halvorsen, 2006; Seixas, 2001). Social studies educators often disagree both on the general purposes of social studies and on how to accomplish particular goals effectively. Consequently, social studies instructional materials differ considerably, not only in the general content included (e.g., history, geography) but also in their approach to topics covered in common (e.g., which tribes are covered in units on Native Americans, which countries in units on geographical regions).

Fortunately, most competing points of view can be understood as contrasting combinations of a few basic ideas about the purposes and goals of social education. Once you understand these ideas, you can clarify your own position, recognize the thinking behind social studies curriculum guides and instructional materials prepared by others, and, if necessary, adapt them to better serve your students' social studies needs.



Although competing ideas about social studies exist, the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS), the leading national professional organization for social studies education, provides a definition that we think you should know and be able to apply to your practice. NCSS defines social studies as “the integrated study of the social sciences and humanities to promote civic competence. Within the school program, social studies provides coordinated, systematic study drawing upon such disciplines as anthropology, archaeology, economics, geography, history, law, philosophy, political science, psychology, religion, and sociology, as well as appropriate content from the humanities, mathematics, and natural sciences” (NCSS, 2010, p. 3).

Besides clarifying and taking a position regarding social studies, elementary school teachers face the challenge of limited time devoted to social studies. Research confirms this trend, which is attributable in large part to the requirements of the *No Child Left Behind* (2002) legislation and its *Adequate Yearly Progress* benchmarks (Fitchett & Heafner, 2010). Throughout the book, and specifically in Chapter 12, we describe how social studies can partially address the time issue through integration with other subjects. (It is, by nature, an interdisciplinary subject since it comprises history and many social science disciplines.) We show how other subjects can be integrated effectively with social studies and how social studies content can be taught in conjunction with other subjects.

In this initial chapter, we introduce you to the research base that informs ideas about powerful social studies teaching. We briefly describe social studies and its history, with the intent of helping you think about what it can become for you and your students. We describe the major approaches to social studies in general and elementary social studies in particular. We then outline guiding questions we think will be helpful to you as you clarify your purposes and goals for social studies and select curriculum and instructional approaches for your classroom. When you have completed this chapter, you should be able to answer the following questions:

1. What is social studies, and what do I want it to become in my classroom?
2. What are curricular approaches to social studies, and how and when would I use them in my classroom?
3. What are instructional approaches to social studies, and how and when would I use them in my classroom?
4. What is the expanding communities approach, and how can curricular and instructional approaches be used with it meaningfully?
5. What guiding questions will I use to select what and how I teach social studies?



The Research Base that Informs Ideas about Powerful Social Studies Teaching

The last chapter of this book (Chapter 14) describes 12 research-based principles of effective teaching of all subjects. These principles include a supportive classroom climate, coherent content, thoughtful discourse, and strategy teaching. We suggest you peruse Chapter 14 before reading the other chapters to obtain an introduction to important research about powerful and effective teaching. We place this chapter last to help you put together everything you have learned in the book (practice, theory, research, and your own ideas about social studies education). Throughout each of the rest of the chapters, we highlight one or more principles closely aligned to the chapter topic to help you bridge theory and practice. When all 12 principles are put together, the puzzle of powerful social studies teaching is complete.

Visions of Social Studies as Citizen Education

Social studies education is not as old a subject as the disciplines it includes. Children learned lessons in history, geography, and political science long before there was “social studies” (Evans, 2004, Halvorsen, 2006). The emergence of social studies as an interdisciplinary school subject is often credited to an influential committee report issued by the National Education Association in 1916. The report called for incorporating content from previously disconnected courses in history, geography, and civics within a curriculum strand to be called “social studies.” Its primary purpose would be social education. Its content would be informed by history, geography, and the social sciences and would be selected based on its personal meaning and relevance to students and its value in preparing them for citizenship. This same vision is still emphasized by leading social studies educators and organizations. NCSS states that the “primary purpose of social studies is to help young people make informed and reasoned decisions for the public good as citizens of a culturally diverse, democratic society in an interdependent world” (NCSS, 2010, p. 3).

It wasn’t until the 1920s that the subject became a part of the school curriculum, and even then it was often taught with separate foci on each of the disciplines. By the 1930s, however, social studies developed as its own comprehensive, pan-disciplinary approach at the elementary level. Topics began to replace the disciplines. Elementary social studies (Grades K–6) did in fact develop along the lines envisioned in the 1916 report. The curriculum drew from history, geography, civics, and economics, and later from sociology, anthropology, and psychology. Furthermore, the content was taught as interdisciplinary social studies organized by topic rather than as school-subject versions of the academic disciplines taught as separate courses. Gradually, the *expanding communities* sequence became the dominant framework for structuring the elementary social studies curriculum. Also known as the expanding horizons or the expanding environments approach, this framework begins with the self and others in kindergarten and then, gradually, expands the purview to the family and school in first grade, the neighborhood in second grade, the community in third grade, the state and region in fourth grade, the nation in fifth grade, and the hemispheres or world in sixth grade.

Curricular historian Kliebard (2004) noted that curriculum debates in all school subjects including social studies reflect continuing struggles among supporters of four competing ideas about what should be the primary basis for K–12 education. The first group believes that schools should equip students with *knowledge that is lasting, important, and fundamental* to the human experience. This group typically looks to the academic disciplines, both as storehouses of important knowledge and as sources of authority on how this knowledge should be organized and taught. The second group believes that *the natural course of child development* should be the basis for curriculum planning. This group would key the content taught at each grade level to the interests and learning needs associated with its corresponding ages and stages. The third group works backwards from its perception of *society's needs*, seeking to design schooling to prepare children to fulfill adult roles in society. With this approach, students are often “tracked” into specific roles in life based upon their family background. Finally, the fourth group seeks to use the schools to *combat social injustice and promote social change*. Consequently, it favors focusing curriculum and instruction around social policy issues. Many past and present curricular debates in social studies can be understood as aspects of the ongoing competition among these four general approaches to K–12 curriculum development.

What do you think should be the primary purpose of social studies education, and education in general?

National, State, and Local Roles in Curriculum and Instructional Decision Making

Who decides which elementary social studies program is used in your school? In the United States, educational decisions are generally made at the state and local levels. However, national organizations provide guidance. Earlier we explained that the leading national professional organization for social studies education is the NCSS, which includes scholars, administrators, supervisors, and teachers. NCSS was founded in 1921 with the purpose to resolve the content and purpose conflict in social studies, address teacher certification requirements, introduce new social studies courses, and smooth communications between education professors and discipline professors (Thornton, 2005). In 1994 and again in 2010, NCSS published curriculum standards for grades K–12 (NCSS, 2010). It organized the standards around what it identifies as the *10 themes of social studies*:



1. Culture
2. Time, Continuity, and Change
3. People, Places, and Environments
4. Individual Development and Identity
5. Individuals, Groups, and Institutions
6. Power, Authority, and Governance
7. Production, Distribution, and Consumption
8. Science, Technology, and Society
9. Global Connections
10. Civic Ideals and Practices

NCSS lists purposes, knowledge, and processes for each of the 10 themes that students should be expected to learn at the elementary, middle, and high school

levels. It also lists products for each of the 10 themes that students could create to demonstrate understanding. These are curriculum standards, which are intended to provide a framework for implementing content standards (NCSS, 2010, p. 12). As social studies is a pan-disciplinary subject, comprised of many different disciplines, the NCSS themes also draw from multiple disciplines. For example, “people, places, and environments” draws from relevant content in anthropology, geography, and sociology. We suggest you examine these curriculum standards (www.socialstudies.org/standards/strands).

In 2009, the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices and the Council of Chief State School Officers collaborated to begin work developing K–12 standards known as the Common Core State Standards. They are written and reviewed by a range of teachers, administrators, and subject-matter experts. All 50 states have joined the process. They are research-based standards that reflect what college and workforce training programs expect of their students and workers, respectively. There are completed standards for the subject areas of English language arts and mathematics. When the Common Core State Standards are written for social studies, you will want to become familiar with them, as they may influence the social studies curriculum in your school. (See www.corestandards.org/).

States often designate committees comprised of subject matter experts (e.g., professors, administrators, and teachers) to write what students should achieve by the end of each grade level. While the NCSS organizes content by theme (e.g., time, continuity, and change), states generally move to the next level of specificity and organize content by disciplines (e.g., history, geography, economics). State assessments are written with the intention of alignment with the content and are used to measure adequate yearly progress for schools and to learn the areas in which students struggle. Students generally do not take standardized assessments in social studies until the upper elementary grades or middle school.

Local districts then tailor the curriculum to their needs and decide the appropriate instructional practices to help teachers fulfill the state content expectations. Teachers sometimes write their own curriculum based on the state content expectations and tailor it to their particular students’ needs and interests.

Explore your state’s social studies content expectations. What social science disciplines are included? What knowledge, skills, and values are students expected to acquire?

Technology Tips

As a teacher, it is important to join educational professional learning communities through membership and/or by attending conferences and reading publications. We recommend you keep apprised of the events and news of the National Council for the Social Studies as well as of your state’s Council for the Social Studies. Try following them on their websites to get the most up-to-date news and to learn about recent research and teaching ideas.

Curricular and Instructional Approaches

Now that you have some background on the history of this subject and have gained a sense of decision-making associated with it, it is important to understand the various curricular and instructional approaches implemented in classrooms. While the distinctions among them are often blurry, we attempt to distinguish them.

Curricular approach refers to the content that is taught. It is often called the scope. John Dewey (1902), known as the father of Progressive education, described the curriculum as "...the cumulative outcome of the efforts, the strivings, and the successes of the human race generation after generation...not as a mere accumulation, not as a miscellaneous heap of separate bits of experience, but in some organized and systematized way" (p. 190). Thus, the curriculum is the knowledge about subjects that experts have developed and refined over time and organized into concrete pieces for children to learn and understand. As we describe the curriculum, we refer to what is called the formal curriculum, which is what states, school districts, and textbooks recommend that children should know and understand. However, curriculum also includes an informal component, or what is also called the hidden curriculum, referring to what is taught unintentionally. Nieto (2002, p. 28) explains the hidden curriculum as the "subtle or not-so-subtle messages that are not part of the intended curriculum." Teachers should think about the subtle, often unintentional messages or lessons that are conveyed through their teaching of formal curriculum. This includes what content is selected and what content is left out. For example, often sources provide only one perspective, and interpretations are usually subjective. As best they can, teachers should provide multiple perspectives on historical events and public issues.

Instructional approach is the way in which the curriculum is taught. We consider instructional approach as a guide a teacher uses in her decisions about the different ways she teaches content. Will her students learn through intensive, hands-on work with globes and maps? Will they learn history primarily through biography? Will they learn through case studies or narratives? These decisions are guided in part by the social science discipline being taught. In addition to the broad instructional approaches we describe in this chapter, we also describe many particular instructional strategies in subsequent chapters.

Curricular Approaches

Although there are many curricular approaches to elementary social studies education, here we limit our discussion to a few examples. Most elementary schools do not follow one curricular approach entirely; generally, they draw from several approaches.

Cultural Literacy/Core Knowledge E. D. Hirsch, Jr., (1987) proposed cultural literacy as the basis for curriculum development. He produced a list of over 5,000 items of knowledge that he believed should be acquired in elementary school as a way to equip students with a common base of prior knowledge to inform their social and civic decision making. Subsequently, educators inspired by Hirsch's book have used it as a basis for developing the Core Knowledge Sequence, which encompasses language arts, world history and geography, American history and geography, visual arts, music, mathematics, and science. Children study the disciplines of *history and geography*. First graders study ancient Egypt and the early American civilizations (Mayas, Incas, Aztecs). Second graders study ancient India, China, and Greece, along with American

history up to the Civil War as well as immigration and citizenship. Third graders study ancient Rome and Byzantium, the Vikings, various Native American tribal groups, and the 13 English colonies prior to the American Revolution. You can learn more about the Core Knowledge Sequence at www.coreknowledge.org/. As a content base for social studies, we think the Core Knowledge Sequence has some potential for powerful social studies teaching and learning. However, we believe teachers need to be skilled at helping students connect the discrete pieces of factual knowledge by making clear the powerful ideas that connect them. We believe the study of cultural literacy has potential, but it is critical to build on children's prior knowledge and experience when using it.

Cultural Universals Cultural universals are defined as basic human needs and social experiences found in all societies, past and present. If these topics are taught with an appropriate focus on powerful ideas, students will develop a basic set of connected understandings about how the social system works; how and why it got that way over time; how and why it varies across location and cultures and what all of it might mean for personal, social, and civic decision making. While Alleman and Brophy developed this curricular approach for the early grades it can be applied to many of the topics covered in the middle or upper elementary grades.

The cultural universals approach is based on the premise that children can understand and appreciate historical episodes described in narrative form, with emphasis on the motives and actions of key individuals, and that they can understand aspects of customs, culture, economics, and politics that focus on universal human experiences and on adaptation problems that are familiar to them and for which they have developed schemas or routines. It also “unveils the mysteries” that the social world presents (from the children's perspective), helping them view the cultural practices under study as rational means of meeting needs and pursuing wants. For more information about the cultural universals as a curricular approach, see *Excursions*, a three-volume series of field-tested units aligned with NCSS themes (Alleman & Brophy, 2001, 2002, 2003b).

Learning in History and the Social Sciences Most elementary social studies content expectations are organized by discipline: history and the core social science disciplines (anthropology, civics, economics, and geography). There are separate content expectations listed for each discipline for early grades, middle grades, and high school. This approach reflects a commitment to teaching the particular content and processes (skills) associated with each discipline. The purpose of this approach is not to make “mini-historians” (Levstik & Barton, 2010) or mini-economists, but to engage students in authentic tasks that adults do to make sense of the human condition (Newmann, Marks, & Gamoran, 1995). One feature of this approach is the potential it offers for rich, substantive learning of the unique knowledge and skills of each discipline.

In history, for example, it is important for students to examine primary sources and compare competing sources of evidence to draw well-founded tentative conclusions. In geography, students need opportunities to construct and analyze a variety of maps (physical and political) and to assess migration patterns for push-pull factors. In economics, students should experience first-hand that scarcity is the result of living in an environment with seemingly unlimited human needs and wants but having limited resources. In political science (civics), students should learn how people, in the past and present, have interpreted ideas in core documents, such as the U.S. Constitution, in fundamentally different and often conflicting ways.

Joy Hakim's *A History of US Series* (2002) is an example of a text focused on particular disciplinary content and processes in history education. Hakim is a former journalist who set out to make history textbooks lively, engaging, and relevant to children. She draws upon primary sources (e.g., core documents, diary entries, advertisements, maps, photographs) and invites readers to interpret these primary materials themselves. The *Freedom: A History of US Series* comprises 10 chronologically organized volumes from the very beginnings of the United States to the present. For more information, see www.joyhakim.com.

While this approach has the potential for learning in both content and processes of each discipline, a drawback is that it can lead to the study of each discipline independently of one another rather than in the integrated manner in which real-life issues and problems are framed. This challenge reflects a perennial dilemma in social studies education: whether to teach by discipline or by topic. Your goals and what you want social studies to become in your classroom should guide your decision making.

Instructional Approaches

There is a wide range of instructional approaches that teachers can select to make the curricular content meaningful and memorable. Again, the decision begins with your goals, your vision for social studies education, and the nature of the content you are teaching. We describe several widely used instructional approaches.

Inquiry-Based Inquiry teaching, a set of processes that can be applied to a wide range of curricular approaches, has been around for a long time. In fact, in his classic book, *How We Think* (1910), John Dewey outlined the basic steps of inquiry teaching that are still followed in principle. These steps include describing the key features of a problem or situation, suggesting possible explanations or solutions, gathering evidence that can be used to test the accuracy of the explanations or solutions, evaluating the solutions or explanations, and developing tentative conclusions. Students ask questions, then formulate hypotheses, collect data to answer the question, analyze the data, and answer the questions posed. More discussion of inquiry-based approaches is located in Chapter 10.

All inquiry approaches share a common feature of asking and answering questions scientifically. Inquiry connotes “minds-on” learning—asking questions and exploring possibilities. It requires pulling ideas apart, analyzing them, and putting them back together. It can be used at all grade levels; however, more guidance is needed in the early grades. While many experts characterize inquiry teaching as student centered, we believe it requires balance to be effective, with the teacher playing an active role throughout the process.

Narrative Approach In a narrative approach, children ask questions, conduct research, and answer questions about social science concepts in the context of an engaging story (either based on actual events or based on general community and economic structures such as neighborhoods or local businesses). Storypath is an example of this approach that draws upon inquiry and problem-solving. The intent is for students to create meaning from experiences. Students actually “live the story” as they co-construct the story plot with their teacher and acquire deep understandings of the people and events in a time and place. All students are included in the story as they create believable characters and grapple with real problems. The approach engages students, and through personalizing it makes the experience meaningful and memorable (McGuire & Cole, 2010, pp. 25–27).

Storypath offers a way to organize social science understandings into meaningful learning experiences, challenging students to consider the value dimensions and implications of their decisions. Storypath combines students' imagination with real-life experiences through an inquiry process and structurally uses the story form of setting, characters, and plot. The story can be based on historical events or on typical structures children encounter on a daily basis (e.g., local communities, businesses). Storypath uses a narrative structure that helps students grasp concepts in a meaningful context (McGuire & Cole, 2010, pp. 25–26).

The idea of Storypath was developed over 40 years ago in Scotland. More recently, Margit E. McGuire refined it based upon years of experiences with teachers and students. Currently 16 units are available for elementary students. Examples of topics include Safari, Great Barrier Reef, Oregon Trail, and Life in Ancient Egypt. For more information, see fac-staff.seattleu.edu/mmcguire/web/.

Social Scientific Issues Issues analysis is an instructional approach suggested by social studies educators who believe that debating social and civic issues is the most direct way to develop dispositions toward critical thinking and reflective decision making in our citizens (Engle & Ochoa, 1988; Evans & Saxe, 1996). Most proposals for issues-centered social studies have focused on the secondary grades, but some have suggested that primary-grade social studies should engage them in inquiry and debate about social policy issues. Reflective discussion of social issues and related decision-making opportunities should be included in teaching social studies at all grade levels, although it is important to consider the age-appropriateness of both the content of the issue and the method of discussion.

With issues analysis, students deliberate matters of public concern about which there is reasonable disagreement. Issues can be historical or contemporary. For example, they might focus on the effects of natural disasters on humans. Through the study of earthquakes, students could analyze their causes and consequences, how human rights are both abused and protected during earthquakes, and how countries can help each other during disasters (Pang, Fernekes, & Nelson, 2010). As another example, students could debate whether drivers should be allowed to text message while driving or whether school uniforms should be required. To teach issues analysis effectively, children need practice in reading material related to the topic, taking a stand and defending their position with evidence or logic, considering other points of view, and listening to others' perspectives (Harris, 2002). Most teachers do not use this approach in the elementary classroom because it is time-intensive, often requires background reading, and departs from traditional approaches. However, issues-centered education offers rich opportunities for children to learn valuable content and to see themselves as future citizens.

Project-Based Learning Project-based learning (which is a kind of problem-based learning) actively involves students in studying a topic that has meaning and application to the world beyond school (Katz & Chard, 2000). The topic can be generated by the teacher or by students. The approach represents a form of “learning by doing” hailed by many advocates of progressive pedagogy. Historically, teachers using this approach selected topics based upon children's perceived interests. It involves exploration (often through data collection) of the topic, structured by the teacher in the form of learning centers, art projects, investigations, surveys, visits from local experts, field trips, and other activities. Often with project-based learning, students collaborate on a project over an extended period of time, producing an artifact or final project such as writing

and presenting a play, producing a newspaper, creating a marketing brochure, or making a presentation to the public.

One example of project-based learning, developed by Halvorsen and her colleague, Nell K. Duke, is a project about making improvements to a community park. Students visit the park, take photographs, and make observations about what needs improvement. They learn about how both citizens and the local government are responsible for maintenance and improvement of the park. They survey community members to determine which proposed improvements are of most importance. They then present the results of their survey and offer their suggestions for enacting the improvement to members of the city's parks and recreation department. The teacher provides explicit teaching and scaffolding of target skills within the context of the project making teaching and learning relevant to students' everyday lives and grounded in their prior knowledge and experiences, characteristics that appear to lead to deeper learning and engagement in social studies.

Service Learning The idea behind service learning is that students serve to learn. Their community work is related to the school curriculum (e.g., core knowledge, cultural universals, disciplinary knowledge), and as a result of their efforts they acquire insights regarding their local communities. The main distinction between service learning and community service is that service learning puts the emphasis on learning while community service emphasizes service. Service learning integrates community service into the classroom instruction. The content is drawn from the disciplines, core knowledge, cultural universals, or other specified curricular approach while community service focuses on volunteering and may or may not be connected to the school curriculum (Boyle-Baise, McClain, & Montgomery, 2010).

In 1988, the National Service-Learning Cooperative (1998) identified Essential Elements of ServiceLearning, which included clear goals for learning, interaction with community members, collaboration, reflection and diversity. In 2001, Rahima Wade (2001) added a set of guidelines known as Principles of Social Justice Oriented Service Learning. In her recommendations, students are at the center; issues must be relevant to them, and they should participate in the development of the service learning project. Boyle-Baise (2002) has proposed still another way of approaching service learning, emphasizing social justice through a multicultural lens. It emphasizes service-for-change that builds community, affirms diversity, and questions inequality. Boyle-Baise's stance regarding multicultural service learning embodies the notion of working with, not for, community people on projects they define; values diversity in its topics, relationships and partnerships; and promotes service projects that are anti-racist, inclusive, and socially just (Boyle-Baise, McClain, & Montgomery, 2010, p. 41). For more information on this example of service learning, examine the Banneker History Project (Boyle-Baise & Binford, 2005). Service learning is not monolithic. Academic goals are primary, and while the focus is on integrating service and classroom instruction, it includes service as charity, for civics, and for change. The challenge is to engage students in ways that can make a difference in the world.

Table 1.1 displays the ways in which a curricular approach can be taught in conjunction with two instructional approaches, with a focus on a basic human need: food. In the first column, we explore the powerful ideas associated with food through the curricular approach, cultural universals. In the second and third columns, we show how two instructional approaches, narrative and service learning, can be used to teach the powerful ideas about food.

TABLE 1.1 CURRICULAR AND INSTRUCTIONAL APPROACHES FOR TEACHING ABOUT THE CULTURAL UNIVERSAL OF FOOD

Curricular Approach Cultural Universals Powerful Ideas Examples:	Instructional Approaches	
	Narrative (Storypath)	Service Learning
	"The Soup Company"	Service Learning Ideas:
Food is a basic human need.	How do humans in different geographic places satisfy the basic human need of food? Soups come in many different forms from many places. Begin by learning about soups eaten at home. Create the setting: the Soup Company.	Working with the community soup kitchen, investigate who comes to the soup kitchen for food and how the soup kitchen is funded, and learn how the clients secure other meals and their other basic human needs.
People around the world tend to eat food from the same basic food groups, although the foods may look quite different due to culture, geography, personal preferences, and other factors.	Why do humans in different geographic places eat different kinds of food? Why do children in our class eat different kinds of soup? Create the characters. Context Building: Learn about soup and a healthy diet.	Working with the community soup kitchen, survey the clients and learn which kinds of soup they prefer and why, and then present the analysis of the survey to the leaders of the soup kitchen for consideration in future menu planning.
Locally grown food has many possible advantages, such as lower costs and sustaining the local economic environment by providing income to the producers.	What are the advantages and disadvantages of locally produced food? Critical Incidents: Troubles in the Soup Company.	Working with the community soup kitchen, design and create a community garden for growing produce that could be ingredients for soup.

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The Expanding Communities Framework: A Traditional Scope and Sequence

Sequence refers to the way the curriculum builds or progresses from one unit to another and from one grade level to another. Effective pedagogy involves teachers building upon students' prior knowledge, so it is important for teachers to know what content the children have already been taught. Often a curriculum follows a spiral sequence, whereby students revisit content at progressively more sophisticated levels as they grow older. Textbook publishers and teachers traditionally have relied on the expanding communities framework for organizing the elementary social studies curriculum. Figure 1.1 shows a visual of the expanding communities for kindergarten through sixth grade.

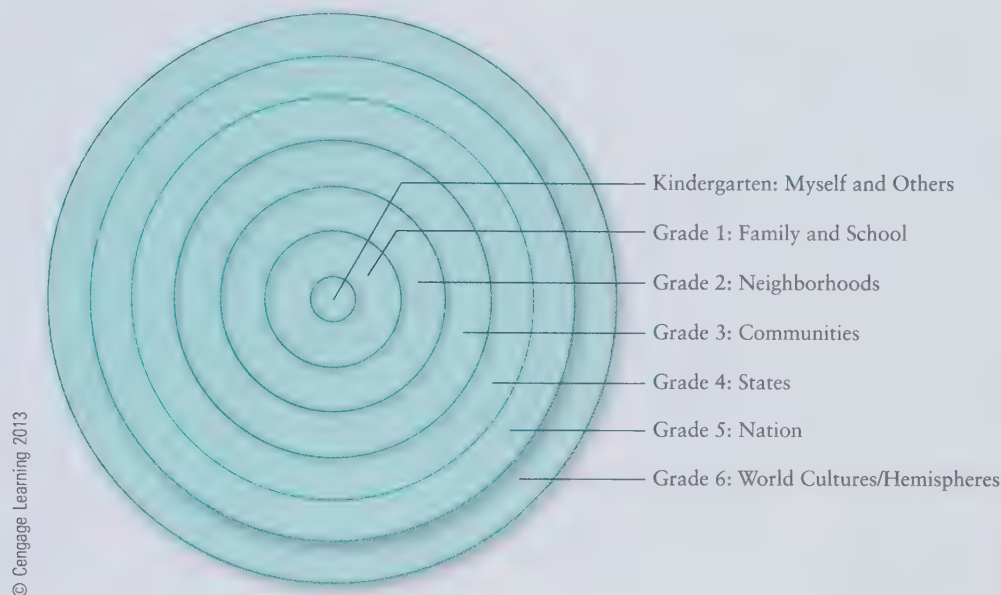
For a time, this framework and the content scope and sequence associated with it were almost universal in U.S. elementary schools, and it still is used in most of them. We suggest you check your own state's content expectations regarding what topics are taught. The following topics are typically addressed in K–6 social studies programs:

Kindergarten: Self, home, school. Discovering myself (Who am I? How am I alike and different from others?), school (my classroom, benefits of school), working together, living at home, community helpers, children in other lands, rules, and celebrating holidays.

Grade One: Families and schools. Family membership, recreation, work, cooperation, traditions, families in other cultures, how my family is alike and different from others, family responsibilities, the family at work, our school and other schools, and national holidays.

Grade Two: Neighborhoods. Workers and services in the neighborhood, food, shelter, and clothing, transportation, communication, living in different neighborhoods, my role within the neighborhood, neighborhoods and communities in other cultures, farm and city life, and protecting our environment. Sometimes communities (if not taught in third grade).

FIGURE 1.1 Visual of Expanding Communities Framework



Grade Three: Communities. Communities past and present, different kinds of communities, changes in communities, community government and services, communities in other countries, cities, careers, urban problems, business and industry, and pioneers and American Indians. Sometimes state studies (if not taught in the fourth grade).

Grade Four: Geographic regions. World regions, people of the world, climatic regions, physical regions, population, food. Also, state studies (if not taught in the third grade). Our state government, state history, people of our state, state laws, state workers, communities past and present. [Note: K–6 or K–8 social studies series typically cover geographic regions in their fourth grade texts. However, local districts often omit or minimize use of these texts and instead mandate that fourth grade be devoted to study of the state, using state-specific textbooks.]

Grade Five: U.S. history and geography. The first Americans, exploration and discovery, colonial life, revolution and independence, westward movement, war between the states, immigrants, lifestyles in the United States, values of the American people, and the United States as world power. Usually U.S. history is only covered up to the Civil War in fifth grade, with later history taught in middle school. Also, some fifth-grade texts include units on U.S. regions, Canada, and Mexico.

Grade Six: World cultures/hemispheres. Political and economic systems, land and resources, people and their beliefs, comparative cultures. Western hemisphere: Early cultures of South America, the major contemporary South American countries, Central American countries, Canada, Mexico, historical beginnings of the western world. Eastern hemisphere: Ancient Greece and Rome, Middle Ages, Renaissance, Middle East, Europe, Africa, India, and China.

Paul Hanna (1963), a former professor of education and author of numerous articles and books about social studies education, who is most widely credited with developing and promoting the expanding communities approach, rationalized it as being logical, in starting with the family and then moving outward toward progressively wider human communities. This idea was viewed as convenient because it allowed for a holistic, co-ordinated approach to the study of people living in societies. He recommended that

students study the ways people in each community carry out basic human activities (cultural universals), such as providing for their physical needs, transporting goods and people, communicating with one another, and governing their societies.

Children would begin with small, familiar communities and then study the same issues in larger, less familiar communities. If implemented as Hanna envisioned, the expanding communities approach would produce systematic social studies instruction structured around *powerful ideas*. However, elementary social studies texts that supposedly implement the model have been criticized as ill-structured collections of factual expositions and skills exercises that follow the letter but not the spirit of Hanna's recommendations.

The expanding communities approach also has been criticized for being dull and boring; being too traditional and middle-class oriented in its treatment of families and communities; being sequenced according to adult rather than child logic (for example, a state is just as abstract a concept as a nation, so there is no reason why children must study the state before studying the nation); fragmenting the curriculum so that students do not get enough opportunity to see relationships that exist across communities; and failing to integrate skills instruction with instruction in content (Akenson, 1989; Frazee & Ayers, 2003).

Recently, efforts to interpret the expanding communities approach more broadly have led to shifts in content coverage (e.g., from a focus on Me and My Community to My Community and Other Communities in the Nation and World) in some of the newer curriculum documents around the country. Yet the expanding communities approach remains fairly entrenched. It is familiar to teachers and so far has proven adaptable enough to incorporate new content, embrace a range of curricular and instructional approaches, and respond to some criticisms without changing its basic structure.

Whether or not the expanding communities approach as spelled out in the textbook is identified as the culprit, there is widespread dissatisfaction with the curriculum content and instructional materials associated with this framework. Most of this criticism is focused on the primary grades and the textbooks that typically define the curriculum. Critiques of instructional materials including the teachers' guides indicate that its content is not driven by coherent social education goals (Haas & Laughlin, 2001; Howard, 2003; VanFossen, 2005). There is broad agreement that the content base of K–3 social studies is thin and redundant and that most of this content, at least as it is presented in the textbooks, is trite, uninteresting, and either already known by students or likely to be learned by them through everyday experience (and thus not worth teaching in school).

A major reason for these problems is that the textbook series fail to articulate K–3 social studies as a coherent subject designed to develop connected sets of fundamental understandings about the social world and to move students toward clearly identified social education goals. As a result, many elementary teachers view (and teach) social studies as a collection of disconnected content and skill clusters rather than as a coherent, goal-oriented curriculum composed of connected networks of knowledge, skills, values, and dispositions to action. A different set of problems arises with upper-grade social studies as typically the content is dense, laden with isolated facts, and with few authentic connections to students' everyday lives.

Guiding Questions for Selecting an Approach to Teaching Social Studies

As you can see, there are many competing ways social studies is taught. In your own classroom, how you teach social studies will be guided by your position regarding your perspective and goals for social studies, by your state's, school district's and school's

approach, and by materials provided. We strongly encourage you to individualize the curriculum in ways that meet the needs of your students and that fit your own educational philosophy. While standards and content expectations provide a framework for what content you are expected to address, you have the ability to influence the curriculum and instructional approaches you implement. To assist you in the process, we offer some guiding questions. We encourage you to develop others as you work with your colleagues in creating the optimal social studies program for your students.

- 1) Does the approach have the capacity to help students become active, committed young citizens who are equipped with the tools and desire to make change for the common good?
- 2) Does the approach have the capacity to teach the history and core social science disciplines using powerful ideas that deepen students' knowledge, skills, and values?
- 3) Does the approach have the capacity to engage all learners intellectually by making content relevant, meaningful, and active?
- 4) Does the approach have the capacity to integrate social studies content with other subject areas?
- 5) Does the approach parallel the standards, curriculum guidelines, curriculum strands, or framework that the school system has adopted?

If the approach and materials you use do not follow these guidelines, how can you change them so they do?

Whatever curricular and instructional approaches you follow, and whatever guidelines you develop for yourself, it is critical that they focus on powerful ideas rather than the trivial or insignificant. We define powerful ideas and give examples of them in Chapter 3.

Technology Tips

There are countless lesson plan ideas and resources on the Internet, and we recommend particular websites in subsequent chapters. While we recommend surfing for ideas and resources, we urge you to borrow from these websites selectively. Many of the lesson plans and resources do not promote powerful social studies teaching because they fail to match your goals. We recommend you develop and use a critical eye for all resources, especially those found on the Internet.

Summary

Social studies is a pan-disciplinary subject that focuses on the social aspects of the human condition. It is informed primarily by history, geography, and the social sciences, but it also draws content from the humanities, physical sciences, local connections, current events, and other sources. In addition to academic learning goals, social studies bears special responsibility for citizen education—promoting civic competence by helping young people develop the ability to make informed and reasoned decisions for the public good as citizens of a culturally diverse, democratic society in an interdependent world.

Most social studies educators (including the NCSS, the leading national organization devoted to social studies education) share the commitment to improving the human condition and promoting civic competence, but they may differ in their views about what should be the primary purposes, goals, and content of the social studies curriculum. We offer descriptions of several curricular and instructional approaches that show the range of ways social studies educators teach the subject, all of which have the capacity to meet this commitment.

We also describe the traditional sequence used for elementary social studies: the expanding communities.

The problem with the expanding communities lies with the often superficial treatments of lesson topics within the approach that feature parades of trivial facts and low-level activities instead of goal-oriented development of powerful ideas applied authentically.

The approach taken throughout this book emphasizes three key points: shifting from the expanding

communities sequence to basic understandings about the human condition as the major rationale for selecting content, focusing on disciplinary knowledge and processes, and structuring this content around powerful ideas that are developed with emphasis on their connections and applications.



TeachSource Video Case

An additional source for you for this chapter is the following TeachSource Video Case: **Supporting Problem-Based Learning in the Elementary Classroom**. This lesson of a fourth-grade classroom demonstrates how problem-based learning can be active, intellectually engaging, and meaningful. As you view the video, consider the following questions: What are the features of problem-based learning? What kinds of activities does the lesson incorporate? What kinds of social studies content would work using problem-based learning?

Reflective Questions

1. Given your current priorities concerning social studies purposes and goals, what are the implications for your teaching?
2. Given what you have just read in Chapter 1, what was the most powerful insight you have acquired? What is one thing you still wonder about?
3. Imagine that the local school board is recommending that the teaching of social studies be temporarily suspended. How will you respond? Why?
4. Imagine that an interviewer asks you to compare the priorities of your former K–6 social studies teachers (based on what you recall from instruction) to your own priorities. How would you respond?
5. As you reflect on your current social studies vision and what the authors had to say in this chapter, what will you consider adding or modifying in some way? Explain.

Your Turn: What Is Social Studies?

For most people, trying to put together a large jigsaw puzzle without any idea of what the finished product should look like would be a pretty frustrating experience. For many children, social studies lessons are like puzzle pieces that are examined individually but never connected to a big picture. These children experience years of content and learning opportunities without ever understanding, appreciating, or applying ideas drawn from social studies. Rarely can they articulate what social studies is, why it is important and how it impacts their lives.

We suggest that you prepare a written statement describing what social studies means to you and how

you will explain this to your students. Make sure that the statement reflects your social studies purposes and goals and their implications for your teaching. As you develop your plan, take into account the following elements drawn from this chapter:

- *Social studies is an pandisciplinary subject.*
- *Social studies bears a special responsibility for citizenship education.*
- *Social studies should focus on teaching fundamental and powerful ideas about the human condition.*
- *Social studies should be coherent and goal-oriented and help students make sense of their world.*

There are many curricular and instructional approaches for social studies, most of which are tangentially connected to the longstanding sequence of expanding communities. These approaches embrace citizenship; address disciplinary knowledge and data-gathering skills; emphasize opportunities to examine, critique, and rethink past traditions, existing social studies practices, and methods of problem solving; and provide personal development with emphasis on a positive self-concept and a sense of personal efficacy. There are unlimited ways you can help students grasp what social studies is all about and how it connects to their heads and hearts.

One teacher whom we have observed does a remarkable job introducing to her class the meaning of social studies. She uses the globe, maps, charts, and cultural artifacts; vignettes involving real-life problems, historical documents, and so on, explaining how her students throughout the year will come to make sense of these as a part of life's story. As a result of analyzing this information and the values connected to it, they will be prepared to make informed decisions about geo-

graphic, social, historical, civic, and other issues that impact their lives now and in the future.

Another teacher connects content examples with student projects from the previous grade. She then spends time reflecting on the content covered, insights acquired, and so on and begins showing how those prior experiences are connected to this year's social studies curriculum. At the end of the year, the students are interviewed by the upcoming teacher about what they have learned, and the teacher helps them begin to form links with the social studies subject matter that will be addressed next year.

After you have carefully planned your approach on paper, collect visuals to illustrate your key points. Share your plan with a peer and elicit feedback. Remember, if we want our students to be excited about social studies, we need to let them in on what it is and why it is important, using more than just words. Knowing what that picture on the puzzle box will look like—at least in broad terms—will go a long way toward creating a desire to participate in “making meaning” from it.

HOW CAN I BUILD A LEARNING COMMUNITY IN MY CLASSROOM: Strategies for Including All Children

Matt Robydek, Second-Year Teacher

Picture this scenario. It's the morning of the first day of school and more importantly, the first day of your new teaching career. This is the day your numerous years spent in the college will finally come to fruition. You take a look around the room. Name tags on desks? Check. Calendar up? Check. Student materials prepared on desks? Check. Intricately decorated bulletin boards? Check. Encouraging greeting on the board? Check. Clever seating arrangement that easily allows for group work AND individual work? Check. Standards and benchmarks and content expectations memorized? Check. You're positive this year will be a success. I mean, how could it not be?

Zoom in to the 100th day of school in your classroom and more importantly, your 100th day of your teaching career. All the preparation you put into your classroom, the materials, the name tags, the seating arrangements, the bulletin boards, now seem to mean nothing. The classroom is in shambles. The students constantly argue and continuously disagree. The phrase "so and so did this" is beginning to test your patience. Almost every student is missing at least one homework assignment and the students seem to be merely going through the motions, showing little to no enthusiasm or interest in your classroom or the subject matter. How could this have happened? Luckily, I have the answer, and it is two powerful words. Learning communities.

You're probably thinking "Well, if learning communities are so integral to a classroom, why didn't one of my dozen professors ever mention this little tidbit of knowledge?" Problem is they most likely did. You were probably just too busy daydreaming to hear it. I mean, why listen to your

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professors anyway? They aren't in the elementary classroom anymore and probably haven't been since whiteboards were a new invention. But the problem is that learning communities are an ageless wonder; they work in all classrooms no matter the time period. Learning communities should be considered the "make it or break it" factor. However, I seem to have forgotten all the necessary steps in building one.

You see, I recently was this new teacher described above. Luckily I remembered about learning communities, the power that they hold, and the potential they can unlock in each and every student. A strong learning community turns a regular classroom into something magical and I was able to witness it firsthand. I believe that the final step (returning to your initial picture) of creating a learning community is the most crucial. Bringing, and keeping, your students engaged in this never ending process is key. It lets them know that you value their ideas and opinions. Consequently, it empowers the students and makes them feel like they are in charge of their learning and the learning community. They will feel like they are now a stakeholder in their education and are not solely relying on their teacher to tell them what to do and what not to do. Incorporating home assignments that match the goals or big ideas of the lessons that you create also helps deepen the learning community and involve outside voices that wouldn't normally be heard in all classrooms. It constructs a new level of understanding for the students and at the same time, helps them see the real world context of the material that they are learning. It is a genuine way of engaging every student and his/her family in the learning process and shows the students that the information they bring to school is worthwhile and important. When you have a strong learning community up and running, the sky is the limit. Students will consistently go above and beyond, which inherently deepens their understandings and the entire classroom will benefit. Students become more independent in their learning, and their involvement, self-efficacy, and motivation sky rockets. Creating a strong learning community is difficult but not impossible. The numerous examples in the chapter are a terrific guide to achieving a strong learning community and I hope you use these examples in your own classroom. I encourage you not to wait for the 100th day either! A strong learning community takes thought, time, and energy to build and maintain. It should be an integral part of every day beginning from the moment school starts.

A Scenario

The week before schools starts, Mrs. Paul's students receive her letter, personally prepared, signed, and mailed. This letter is important to them because it comes from their new teacher. It fills them with anticipation, hopes, and dreams. They are eager to join her in Room 104 to begin collectively building a learning community. Her letter has given them a preview of the formal curriculum—the content to be experienced and the

overarching goals to be achieved, the planned field trips and visits by resource people, and so on. It also has communicated high expectations for all learners. Most importantly, it has addressed the “hidden” curriculum—Mrs. Paul’s expectations concerning the overall classroom climate and students’ orientations toward learning, their teacher, and one another. Celebrating differences, fairness, rights and responsibilities, caring, and sharing, it offers a vision that her new students will find compelling and curious. They think Room 104 sounds special but they wonder, “Will we really play a role in making all of that happen?”

Anxiety, optimism, and uncertainty are written on the students’ faces as they come to Room 104 on the first day of school. Unlike in previous years, this day greets students with a welcome doormat, soft music, a partially decorated room that includes a special bulletin board depicting the personal history of the teacher, and other trappings that reflect the communal voice that is about to be introduced and allowed to grow.

Introductions and organizational matters are soon followed by reference to the learning community that was promised in the letter. Mrs. Paul begins with a description, accompanied by visuals, of her ideal learning community. She is quick to say that this is her “sketch,” her “vision,” and that she wants to hear about the children’s. A lengthy conversation ensues. References are made to real communities, to gardens, and to other natural places where there are plans for building something special with common goals, hopes, and dreams and where diversity is appreciated. The teacher’s storyline is inspiring, authentic, and presented with direction and purpose, yet it contains room for allowances that children would view as important and engaging.

Mrs. Paul goes on to explain herself as the teacher who receives a paycheck for assuming the role of head educator who orchestrates learning opportunities for all students. She makes no apologies for being the designated leader in charge, but she likens her role to that of the president of the United States, who needs a lot of help to be an effective leader of our country. She explains that a teacher needs cooperation and assistance from everyone in the class in order to promote democratic life in the classroom.

The president has a cabinet, and Mrs. Paul plans to have one too. Health, education, welfare, and social are among the communal functions that she draws upon for organization, attachment, and action. Initially she assigns a committee chair and appoints members to each area. Over the next two or three weeks, the committees will engage in dialogue about their roles, rights, responsibilities, how they will function, and how they will monitor their performance. Individual committee meetings coupled with large-group discussions are the secret to effective planning and well-executed efforts. Individual committee role and function descriptions, student rights and responsibilities, expectations, and so on are developed and posted around the room to ensure effective communication and encourage life applications.

During the course of Mrs. Paul’s storyline about learning community and cabinet member efforts from the past year, she shares that the welfare committee wanted to support students with special needs. Consequently, they decided to offer lunch money on an emergency basis for students who had no lunch—either because they forgot to bring one or lacked the resources to purchase one. This group felt that these students should “work off” their loans, so the welfare committee found school building tasks that the students could get paid to do in order to reimburse the committee. This committee held fundraisers (e.g., used book sales, popcorn and bake sales) to generate resources. Last year’s welfare committee also created a supply trunk with hats, shoe laces, mittens, and other clothing, collected during a donation drive for the purpose of applying “good citizen” actions toward peers. [Note: We believe that elementary teachers should be willing to address socioeconomic and other family circumstance differences that impact their

students rather than pretend that they did not exist. However, it is important to acknowledge such differences matter-of-factly and respond to them within the spirit of learning community norms. Talk and act in terms of coping (and helping others to cope) with special needs, not labeling or pitying those who have them.]

Supportive Classroom Climate, Cooperative Learning, and Achievement Expectations

Principle 1: Supportive Classroom Climate: Students learn best within cohesive and caring learning communities. The teacher establishes a positive learning community in which students are encouraged to take risks and use mistakes as opportunities to learn. The teacher cares about students as individuals and attends to their emotional and social development as well as their academic development. *Principle 10: Cooperative Learning: Students often benefit from working in pairs or small groups to construct understandings or help one another master skills.* Cooperative learning promotes students' social and emotional development and has the capacity to promote students' academic growth. Students learn from each other when they share knowledge with each other and teach each other skills. *Principle 12: Achievement Expectations: The teacher establishes and follows through on appropriate expectations for learning outcomes.* Teachers' expectations about students' abilities play a role in students' sense of self-efficacy, or what they feel capable of doing. The teacher holds high expectations for students, coupled with strong support for students to achieve those expectations. Please see Chapter 14 for a more in-depth description of each principle.

Launching a Learning Community

You may want to begin your school year as Mrs. Paul does by putting forth a vision of your classroom as a learning community, using past class events, work samples, and personal stories to engender early interest and provide meaning and context. Each new class, however, would be encouraged to generate its own ideas. You would plan carefully to ensure that every child has classroom (departmental) responsibilities that are within his/her capacity, match committee goals, and fit the community vision. You also would set aside periodic committee and total-class reflection time to ensure that learning community efforts are contributing to social understanding and personal and civic efficacy.

How do you envision the first day with your students? We suggest that at the start of the school year you do the following:

- *Establish a vision of your classroom as a learning community.*
- *With students, write a set of guidelines or principles regarding how the classroom will be run.*
- *Plan carefully to ensure that every child has responsibilities within his or her capacity.*

Instead of using the president's office and cabinet as your metaphor, you could use the governor of a state with a supportive cabinet, a family, a sports team, or a

neighborhood to build context and structure into your learning community. The main idea is to let your students get a sense of what it means to satisfy needs and wants and to participate in a community where rights and responsibilities are exercised in ways that allow community members to feel in control of their destinies. There is probably no better way to build a sense of personal efficacy—a contributing factor to student achievement.

The classroom community provides a forum for living informal social studies in a safe, orderly, and enjoyable environment. It serves as a natural way to connect cognitive, socio-emotional, and moral development. It also facilitates Dorsett's (1993) concept of a good curriculum as one that respects and balances the need to educate "three people" in each individual: the worker (in this case, a student whose work is to attend school), the citizen, and the private person. All of these dimensions can be experienced first hand in a laboratory-like setting in your classroom community.

The story of Mrs. Paul launching her community is intended to position your thinking about a powerful teaching and learning opportunity that considers knowing, understanding, appreciating, and applying a "hands-on" approach to democratic life in your classroom (a microcosm of society). If you decide to give your community a name, be sure it does not distract from the values and expectations you want your microcosm to represent.

Your learning community and the strategic moves you make as you develop it pave the way for building an environment for addressing social studies and its foundational academic disciplines. For example, every child in the community has a place in space (geography), a cultural background (anthropology), a set of experiences across time (history), needs and wants (economics), roles, norms, and expectations (sociology), the need to be guided or governed (political science), and a developing personal identity (psychology). Through structured discourse, students will begin to realize that social studies is dynamic and an integral part of their lives across the school day—even without leaving the classroom.

The remainder of this chapter expands on the notion of developing a sense of community, presents a series of steps for creating it, and discusses how to ensure the learning community meets the needs of all learners. It also describes a lesson on specialness from a unit on childhood (adolescence for upper grades), and explains how the unit can provide a natural segue into substantive social studies content, yet deepen the students' understanding and appreciation of their community and its members. This chapter addresses strategies for motivating students to learn within the learning community context, paying particular attention to student diversity.

Productive Communication and Interaction Patterns

Research on powerful social studies teaching underscores the importance of establishing a productive context for learning by encouraging the class to function as a learning community. This involves articulating and following through on expectations relating to both teacher-student and student-student interaction patterns. A learning community atmosphere is an open and supportive one in which students are encouraged to speak their minds without fear of ridicule of their ideas or criticism for mentioning taboo topics or voicing forbidden opinions. Students appreciate that the purpose of reflective discussion of the meanings and implications of content is to work collaboratively to deepen understandings. Consequently, they are expected to listen carefully and respond thoughtfully to one another's ideas and to work together to solve problems collaboratively.

Both in advancing their own ideas and in responding critically to others, they are expected to build a case based on relevant evidence and arguments and to avoid

inappropriate behavior. They are challenged to come to grips with controversial issues, to participate assertively but respectfully in group discussions, and to work productively with partners or groups of peers in cooperative learning activities. They are expected to assume individual and group responsibilities for managing instructional materials and tasks and to develop an ethic of caring for the personal, social, and academic needs of every child and adult who is part of the classroom.

Four Steps for Creating a Learning Community

The first step is formulating overall classrooms goals specific to a social education learning community. These goals will cut across the spectrum of cognitive, socio-emotional, and moral development. For example, a cognitive goal might be for students to acquire knowledge, understanding, and appreciation for cultural diversity and apply what they learn from their social studies units to life in the classroom. A socio-emotional goal might be to develop the ability to question opinions in responsible ways, and a moral goal might be to treat one another with respect.

In the second step, you focus on the physical environment: creating and maintaining a classroom climate that features shared responsibility, promotes tolerance and appreciation of diversity, and provides the support needed for the realization of intended learning outcomes. Use of physical space, accessibility of instructional materials, and availability of visual supports (such as charts, schedules, and the daily agenda and calendar of events) all contribute to the setting; so do visual materials that promote learning of unit content or provide pictorial support for academic, socio-emotional, and moral responsibility. Plants, music, rugs, special chairs, identifiable spaces for reading or writing, manipulative materials, maps, globes, and computers all build a sense of engagement and connectedness to the classroom milieu.

The third step in building the learning community includes the establishment of rules, norms, roles, and procedures. These include communicating with parents to beginning the school day, managing individual and group work, resolving peer conflicts, and promoting appropriate behavior in the classroom as well as on the playground, in the lunchroom, and on the school bus.

The fourth step involves returning to your initial metaphor or picture, and as a class creating a vision for how all of this will function. As part of the dialogue, pose questions such as: "What should our classroom look like to us?" "What should it look like to a passerby?" "What should it sound like?" "Feel like?" Responses can be captured in words, pictures, and photographs to be displayed as reminders of goals and as self-monitoring aids for achieving them.

Your style as a teacher, your prior experiences, and your unique teaching situation and students will all contribute to how you begin "growing" your learning community. The four steps are elaborated during daily dialogues that focus on the learning community as it is evolving. Questions that might be a part of these conversations include: What is going well? What needs to be modified? Why? How do we need to change a procedure? Does the physical setting need modification? Do we need more or fewer students on a given committee? Are the tasks clearly defined? Does everyone understand his/her role?

Much attention needs to be given to the maintenance of learning community ideas and expectations. Be careful about moving too quickly. After creating an overall vision and plan with the class, work on one facet of the community at a time, such as rules or guiding principles. Then move on, but continuously loop back to previous steps, procedures, and practices. Think of your learning community as an ongoing growth process that has existing expectations but is always moving to new heights of understanding and positive actions.

A Childhood Unit as Your Content Vehicle

A unit on childhood can provide a natural segue into substantive social studies content that draws heavily from the social science disciplines in pan-disciplinary ways, aligns with several of the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) (2010) themes of social studies, and deepens the students' understanding and appreciation of their community. A childhood unit fits well as an introduction to the year because it personalizes learning for both the teacher and the students in multiple ways; it can be adapted to a range of grade levels (for upper grades, shifting the focus to adolescence); it provides an array of learning opportunities for students to experience, value, and apply; it introduces students to geographic, historical, economic, and cultural aspects of their lives that will be revisited throughout the year and lead to more sophisticated understandings; it affords opportunities to make the familiar strange and the strange familiar; and it appeals to students because the content includes them at the center.

Such a unit is also a perfect place to focus on the idea that all people share some common experiences as they progress through and beyond childhood, yet everyone is unique and the differences are to be respected. A part of building your classroom community should include conversations about diversity and respect. The content of the unit can deepen children's thinking about these matters in natural ways.

Early in the unit you could provide a lesson on the elements of childhood or adolescence, underscoring the idea that children everywhere experience many similar physical, behavioral, and intellectual changes in their early years. Creating a classroom bulletin board depicting these changes with photos of student members of the community will stimulate interest in the topic and visually underscore the big ideas. Of course, your students will love to see photos of their teacher's childhood! Students will be learning a lot about each other, and through your planned lessons they will construct understandings or networks of ideas associated with childhood as a cultural universal.

While children all over the world are alike in many ways, each one is unique (e.g., fingerprints, voice, cells of the body, face, the ways he or she thinks, feelings about things, talents). Lessons addressing inheritance, culture, environment and other factors that contribute to specialness or uniqueness provide good opportunities for conversations about appreciating diversity and avoiding prejudice—topics that need to be revisited regularly in authentic ways instead of only on designated holidays or when there is reference to the term in a sidebar in a textbook.

There is a host of children's literature sources that you might consider as you develop and implement lessons about children around the world. *To Be a Kid* (Ajmera & Ivanko, 1999), *Wake Up, World!, A Day in the Life of Children Around the World* (Hollyer, 1989), and *Children Just Like Me* (Kindersley & Kindersley, 1995) are great examples illustrating how children's lives everywhere are alike in many ways, yet different in other ways due to culture, geographic conditions, economic resources, and personal choices. Authentic children's literature laced with interactive narrative, electronic pen pals, or resource people in the community can be used to deepen children's thinking about culture, especially as these resources connect to their own lives. Attention to chauvinism will occur naturally as you engage in conversations about cultural borrowing, prejudice, specialness, and so forth.

Birthdays and rites of passage are other useful topics. Children all around the world have birthdays, although they may have very different celebration customs from ours, and there are places in the world where individual birth dates go unnoticed and instead people have communal birthdays when everyone becomes one year older. Also, people all over the world celebrate major happenings in their lives. Creating lessons that focus

on these ideas builds empathy and appreciation and goes a long way in ridding the classroom community of prejudice.

Designing lessons that focus on children and work can add both a historical and a cultural perspective. In pioneer times, for example, children in America worked to help support their families; later, some worked as apprentices; and still later, some worked in factories. Today, however, there are laws against this and children go to school, which is considered their work, until they reach at least age 16. Most go on to complete high school. Children also attend school as their work in many other parts of the world, but there are places where, due to limited resources, children work at least part time in factories or fields. Exposure to these ideas will broaden your students' thinking and foster empathy and appreciation for children around the world in new ways. Subsequent lessons might address early schools and schools today, focusing on changes over time and how economic resources are a major factor everywhere in determining the amount and quality of schooling available to children.

A series of lessons on toys and entertainment might also be included, again using historical, economic, and cultural threads to build meaningfulness. Main ideas might include children and their families long ago often combined work and entertainment (e.g., husking bees, cabin raisings); families long ago made most things themselves including toys; and the idea that toys and entertainment have become big businesses in our country, but in places where resources are limited, children's games and entertainment are still much like those enjoyed by American children long ago. These lessons would provide an ideal place for building empathy with people of the past. For example, as you share your family story about toys and entertainment, perhaps beginning with your great-grandparents and using an interactive timeline accompanied by drawings, photos, or props, you can talk about changes that have occurred—including many during your lifetime—and the trade-offs associated with them. You can explain how technology and new resources trigger change, bringing both progress and new challenges. After the change, we still have most of the things we had in the past, but the older things are used or played with less frequently. They are sometimes collected by a few people, and the best specimens are treasured and put on display for us to observe in museums. A related big idea is that availability as well as values and personal preferences influence one's choices of material resources and products.

Other thematic strands that might be woven throughout your childhood unit include children as consumers play a role in making choices regarding goods and services that families purchase and children can make a difference. Citizenship can come to life in your classroom community if you take on a project to help a local family who has a need due to insufficient resources or a crisis. A lesson on childhood talents and interests could provide a beginning look at careers and how they sometimes evolve.

Table 2.1 shows the alignment between the NCSS social studies strands and Brophy and Alleman's (2003b) unit on childhood. We encourage you to consider such alignment in planning your unit as well. We find the NCSS (2010) standards statement to be a useful tool in thinking about the content in multiple ways that, in turn, lead to comprehensive unit plans.

We also suggest that you create home assignments that match the goals of the lessons and link the main ideas developed in the classroom to out-of-school settings. These assignments will allow applications of the content that feed back into your development of classroom community, especially if you, the teacher, also complete them. Examples might include, "Interview a grandparent, neighbor, or friend about toys and entertainment when he or she was a child as compared to today," or "Talk with a family member about one new feature you would like to add to your next birthday celebration, given what you have learned about birthdays in other cultures. Ask family members about how they celebrated their birthdays as children."

TABLE 2.1 LESSONS FROM THE CHILDHOOD UNIT, SOCIAL STUDIES EXCURSIONS, VOLUME 3

NCSS 10 Themes of Social Studies													
I. Culture—the study of culture and cultural diversity	1. Elements of Childhood	2. Specialness	3. A Day in the Lives around the World	4. Birthdays	5. Rites of Passage	6. Children and Work	7. Early Schools	8. Today's Schools	9. Toys and Entertainment	10. Children as Consumers	11. Adults Provide for Needs	12. Childhood Talents and Needs	13. Children Can Make a Difference
II. Time, Continuity, and Change—the study of human beings in and over time	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
III. People, Places, and Environments—the study of people, places, and environments	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
IV. Individual Development and Identity—the study of individual development and identity	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
V. Individuals, Groups, and Institutions—the study of interactions among individuals, groups, and institutions	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
VI. Power, Authority, and Governance—the study of how people create and change structures of power, authority, and governance	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
VII. Production, Distribution, and Consumption—the study of how people organize for the production, distribution, and consumption of goods, and services	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
VIII. Science, Technology, and Society—the study of relationships among science, technology, and society	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
IX. Global Connections—the study of global connections and interdependence	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
X. Civic Ideals and Practices—the study of the ideals, principles, and practices of citizenship in a democratic republic	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
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■ = primary focus
 ● = supporting focus

As you share your responses and talk about how you experienced the big ideas in out-of-school settings, you and the students will learn about one another and your families. This creates intimacy within the classroom community and fosters an appreciation of diversity. An added bonus is that what you learn about each home situation creates opportunities for personalizing school content in the future by relating it to the jobs, hobbies, and cultural backgrounds of your students and their families.

In summary, the classroom learning community is a place for helping students practice democratic life, in addition to addressing the academic subjects. Social studies content developed around the topic of childhood offers an opportunity to bridge the formal and informal, to enrich and deepen personal connections within the community, and at the same time develop networks of connected ideas associated with history, geography, and the social sciences (with the child at the center).

Cooperative Learning in a Community Setting

Once the students begin to feel comfortable with one another and interact in ways that reflect learning community norms, they are ready to work collaboratively. Cooperative learning formats are often used in social studies because they fit so well with the overarching goals of the subject, for at least three reasons (Winitzky, 1991). First, social studies teachers tend to use group work more than other teachers, and research on cooperative learning provides practical suggestions for making these activities more effective. Second, important goals of social education, such as cross-ethnic acceptance and interaction and the integration of students with special needs, are highly congruent with behavioral outcomes associated with cooperative task structures. Finally, the values underlying democratic classroom climate and cooperative learning also align well with the values promulgated by social studies educators.

A large body of research evidence indicates that cooperative learning techniques can affect achievement in positive ways (Good & Brophy, 2003), although it is important to know which techniques to use and how to implement them. Slavin (1995) emphasized that cooperative learning approaches that facilitate achievement feature two key characteristics: The activities have clear group goals, and individual members of each group are held personally accountable for their contributions. This implies the need to assess students on their cooperative efforts and learning outcomes.

Effects on outcomes other than achievement are even more impressive. Well-implemented cooperative learning arrangements promote friendship choices and pro-social patterns of interaction among students who differ in achievement, gender, race, and ethnicity. They also promote the acceptance of mainstreamed students with special needs and frequently have positive effects on self-esteem and academic self-confidence. Students who are taught how to interact in a collaborative environment tend to spend more time on tasks (asking questions, giving feedback, checking answers) and to go beyond just giving answers by providing explanations designed to make sure the listener understands the concept or process.

Preparing Students for Cooperative Learning

In *Developing Groupwork*, Cohen (1994) points out the importance in preparing students for cooperative learning. It requires you as the teacher to decide which norms and skills are needed for the particular group setting you have in mind. Typically, the norms and skills are taught separately as skill builders rather than as lectures or group discussions. Cooperative learning is most effective when it is taught in stages (Cohen, 1994, pp. 62–84). First, decide whether your objective is relatively routine or whether the goal involves

understanding concepts and big ideas. Then decide on the type of interaction you want to see and hear when you listen in on a group. Cohen (1994) found that the best results are achieved when both individuals and the group are held accountable.

The next stage involves creating the task that aligns with your objective or goal and expresses what you want the students to learn. Planning an orientation for students serves as a means of focusing on the major points that underlie the activities and prepares them for the challenges of working together.

Before students are ready to begin their group work, you must decide on the size of the groups and their composition. Typically, groups larger than five present challenges for participation. In comprising groups, consider academic achievement, gender, race, ethnicity, and interests, and always have your goals and objectives as the major determinants. As your use of group work continues over time, make sure every student has a chance to work with every peer in the class—an important factor in building a strong learning community.

Once students know the goals, the task focus, and the expectations, and once they are assigned to a group, make sure they are seated in a fashion so they can see and hear everyone else. During the implementation of the group work, typically the teacher assumes the role as a silent guide by the side. If that role shifts, it is usually a good idea to share with students what the teachers will be doing and why.

Planning a wrap-up at the conclusion of each group session is essential for accountability and to explicitly help students realize expectations. If the task extends over more than one class period, a mini report focusing on a key idea or new question is often sufficient. The important thing to remember is that debriefing is a vital part of group work. Looking for patterns, multiple perspectives, or disconnects promotes higher-order thinking and engenders a high level of student engagement. Both the process and the product need to be considered with both the teacher and the peers participating in the process, assuming the criteria for evaluation have been made clear.

Task Structures

Cooperative learning methods differ according to the task structures that are in effect. The term *task structures* refers to the nature of the task (its goal, the kinds of responses that it requires) and the working conditions that accompany it. Task structures may be individual, cooperative, or competitive. In *individual* task structures, students work alone; in *cooperative* task structures, they collaborate in learning or in producing some group product; and in *competitive* task structures, they compete, either as individuals or as teams, in various contests, debates, or games. Competitive task structures usually are not compatible with learning community principles, but both individual and cooperative task structures should be observed frequently in social studies classes.

Members of student teams or groups may cooperate in working toward either group goals or individual goals. When pursuing *group goals*, the members work together to produce a single product that results from the pooled resources and shared labor of the group. For example, the group might prepare a report, video, skit, or multi-media presentation about childhood long ago for presentation to the class. When working cooperatively to reach *individual goals*, group members assist one another by discussing how to respond to questions or assignments, checking work, or providing feedback or tutorial assistance. Individual students are responsible for their own assignments, but they are allowed to consult with one another as they work.

Cooperative task structures also differ according to whether or not there is task specialization. *Task specialization* is in effect when a larger task is divided into several sub-tasks that are assigned to different group members. In preparing a report on childhood in another country, for example, task specialization would be in effect if one group member were assigned to do the introduction, another to write about the country's geography and

climate, another about its natural resources and economy, and so on. Group goals and task specialization are common features of cooperative learning methods that are popular in social studies.

In a robust learning community, whole-class instruction often will be complemented by small-group learning activities as well as individual opportunities for personalizing and applying the major understandings and skills. For example, in a lesson on birthdays, the teacher might share information and pictures describing various ways children celebrate this special day around the world. This could be followed by a cooperative group activity, with students listing and discussing all the new practices that they learned about in the lesson. Finally, students could independently write a journal entry describing what they would like to do on their next birthday, incorporating a practice from another culture that they learned about during the lesson.

Cooperative Learning Techniques

Several cooperative learning techniques are especially suited to social studies. Among them are Jigsaw (Aronson, Blaney, Stephan, Sikes, & Snapp, 1978), Learning Together (Johnson, Johnson, & Holubec, 1998), Group Investigation (Sharan & Sharan, 1992), Jigsaw II, an adaptation of the original Jigsaw (Slavin, 1986) and Complex Instruction (Cohen, Lotan, Scarloss, & Arellano, 1999). Cooperative learning is a natural feature of a classroom where a democratic community context is in place. Students cannot merely be placed together and told to cooperate; they need to be taught how to work collaboratively, engage in productive dialogues, and provide constructive feedback and help. Having a learning community plan in place prior to the implementation of cooperative learning techniques provides a good foundation for successful results.

In original *Jigsaw*, students work in home groups in which they teach one another material that they have learned in their respective expert groups. For example, a class of 20 students might be divided into four home groups consisting of five students each, with one member of each home group being designated as Number One, Number Two, Number Three, Number Four, or Number Five. To set the stage for Jigsaw, the teacher divides a chunk of curricular material into five subsections or assigns each group a particular primary source to analyze or a particular region of the country to research (also numbered one through five). Each subsection is comprehensible in its own right but forms only part of the total content to be learned. Students first work in expert groups—leaving their home groups to join students from other home groups who share the same number—to learn the corresponding subsection of content. Members of expert groups are expected to work together to learn the information thoroughly enough to be able to teach it to the other members of their home groups. Once this learning has occurred, the expert groups dissolve and the members go back to their home groups and take turns teaching what they have learned to their home group peers. We recommend that specified amounts of time be established for completing both the expert group and the home group activities so that students are clear about their responsibilities and stay on task. The teacher can circulate during group times to monitor progress and intervene if necessary.

Jigsaw II is used when a chunk of textual reading needs to be completed in a short period of time to provide context or a data base for further inquiry. All of the students begin by reading a common narrative, and then each member of a given team is assigned a separate topic on which to become an expert. Students from separate teams who have been assigned to the same topic meet in expert groups to dialogue, after which they return to their teams and teach what they have learned to their teammates. Teachers find Jigsaw II especially successful in diverse classes that subsume a wide range of reading abilities, although care must be taken to ensure heterogeneity within each group.

Learning Together features diversity within groups among students who differ in achievement level, gender, race, or ethnicity. Each group is expected to turn in a collaborative product, and students are praised if they worked well together and if there was good task performance. Traditionally, Learning Together has four features: positive interdependence, face-to-face interaction among all students, individual accountability for mastering assigned material, and instruction in appropriate interpersonal and small-group skills. This works effectively for problem-based learning.

Group Investigation works very well when a social studies unit has several natural subtopics. For example, a unit focusing on a particular region might offer a range of subtopics such as environmental concerns, economic priorities, climatic conditions, and so on. Students are formed into interest groups to work together using an array of instructional materials and applying cooperative inquiry, group discussion, cooperative planning, and cooperative projects. Each member of the group chooses an individual task and carries out the appropriate activities to contribute to a group report.

If students have not had previous experience with Group Investigation, the teacher can guide the whole class through one of the subtopics, first paying particular attention to the big ideas to be developed. For example, the class could use maps, the globe, and textual information to determine the climatic conditions of the region and how they impact where people live, the kinds of work they do, and how it influences leisure activities. Then it would be appropriate to assign groups to examine each of the other subtopics in an effort to acquire a comprehensive picture of a region and the factors that contribute to decision making associated with it. The debriefing whole-class discussions following each of the group reports with an eye toward the big ideas is essential if this method is to enhance meaning.

Having discussed establishing a learning community and incorporating cooperative learning methods, we now address the broad topic of student motivation. As the leader of your learning community, you want to stimulate your students' motivation to learn—their tendency to find lessons and learning activities meaningful and worthwhile and to try to get the intended learning benefits from them.

Motivating Students to Learn

Students' motivation is rooted in their subjective experiences (thoughts, feelings), especially those connected to their willingness to engage in lessons and learning activities and their reasons for doing so. Brophy (2010) reviewed existing theory and research on this topic, with emphasis on identifying strategies for motivating students to learn. He depicted motivation in the classroom as expectancy \times value reasoning, within the social context of a learning community.

The expectancy \times value model of motivation holds that people's willingness to expend effort on an activity depends on how much they expect to perform successfully if they apply themselves (and thus obtain whatever rewards successful performance brings) and on how much they value those rewards or the opportunity to engage in the activity itself. Effort investment is not likely if either the expectancy factor or the value factor is missing entirely. People do not willingly engage in activities that they do not enjoy and that do not lead to valued outcomes, even if they know that they can perform successfully. Nor do they willingly invest in even highly valued activities if they believe that they cannot succeed no matter how hard they try. Students will be motivated to learn to the extent that they view classroom activities and home assignments as meaningful and worthwhile and believe that they can succeed at them if they invest reasonable effort.

In addition to these subjective thoughts and feelings, students' motivation is affected by interactions with their teachers and classmates. Some classroom climates are supportive of motivation to learn, but others interfere with it. So, a comprehensive look at student motivation requires attention to the individuals' internal thoughts about expectancy and value and their external experiences in the social context (learning community).

The Expectancy Side of Motivation

Students who approach learning activities with success expectations (a sense of efficacy or confidence) tend to focus their complete attention on the activity and bring all of their resources to bear in responding to its demands. Free of concerns about failure, they enjoy appropriate challenges, look forward to gaining new knowledge and skills, and persist in seeking to do so. If they become confused or realize that they have made mistakes, they will attempt to diagnose and address the problem, or if necessary get help. Their goals and learning strategies focus on acquiring the knowledge and skills that the activity is intended to develop.

In contrast, students with efficacy problems experience learning activities very differently. Because they are not confident that they can succeed (or worse, are convinced that they cannot succeed), they will not be able to focus their full attention on the activity's demands. Instead, they will be distracted by anxiety, feelings of helplessness, expectations of failure, and worry about its consequences. Over time, they will come to prefer easy and routine tasks over more interesting and challenging ones (because they would rather be bored than embarrassed). They will begin to give up easily at the first sign of difficulty rather than persist in trying to overcome confusion and mistakes, and they will become more concerned about not looking stupid than about acquiring new knowledge and skills.

As a teacher, you will want to help your students maintain their confidence as learners and approach learning activities with productive goals and strategies. Doing so requires coordination of appropriate curriculum, instruction, and assessment.

Curriculum. Appropriate curriculum presents students with content and activities that lie within their *zone of proximal development*, which refers to the range of knowledge and skills that they are not yet ready to learn on their own but can learn with help from teachers (Tharp & Gallimore, 1988). Your curriculum should continually challenge students within their zones of proximal development, yet make it possible for them to meet these challenges by providing sufficient instruction, guidance, and feedback. Students' prospects for successful learning depend not only on the difficulty of the activity itself, but also on the degree to which you prepare them for it in advance and scaffold their learning efforts through guidance and feedback.

Instruction. Most students do not find social studies particularly difficult (compared to mathematics and science, for example). However, some may show expectancy-related problems, especially with demanding assignments. They may be daunted at the prospect of planning and carrying out a complicated project in order to accomplish what seems like a distant goal, but they will respond positively if you explain and model coping skills such as breaking the project into stages that enable them to identify and pursue a series of proximal goals that eventually lead to the ultimate one. In the process, teach them to look backward as well as forward so that they will appreciate the progress they are making as they complete each step. Also, help them to view learning activities as opportunities to increase their knowledge and skills, not as tests of their existing capacities. Explain that knowledge and skills are not fixed but are developed through engagement in learning activities; that you are prepared to help them to become successful learners; and that they can expect to do so if they apply themselves consistently.

Assessment. Think of assessment as a way to keep track of the progress of the class as a whole and alert you to the need for adjustments in your instructional plans, not just a way to provide a basis for assigning grades. Ordinarily, daily participation in lessons and work on assignments, especially work on significant projects, should be used at least as much as tests for assessing progress and grading students. In talking about assessment with your students, emphasize its role in providing informative feedback about their learning, and portray yourself as allied with them in preparing for the tests, not as allied with the tests in pressuring them. Follow through by using the assessment information to provide informative feedback on progress made toward major instructional goals. Include “safety nets” for students who are struggling (e.g., opportunities to take an alternative test following a period of review and relearning, or to earn extra credit by producing some product to indicate that they have overcome the deficiencies identified in the test performance).

Low achievers and students who fear failure often perform considerably below their potential on tests because they become anxious when they are aware of being evaluated. You can minimize test anxiety problems using the following strategies:

1. Rather than “spring” a test on students, let them know the date of the test, its general scope and nature, and how they can best prepare for it.
2. Be friendly and encouraging when administering the test, and avoid making the testing situation any more threatening than it needs to be.
3. Avoid time pressures.
4. Stress the feedback functions rather than the evaluation or grading functions of tests when discussing them.
5. Present tests as opportunities to assess progress rather than as measures of ability.
6. Give pre-tests to accustom students to “failure” and provide base rates for comparison when you administer post-tests later.
7. Teach your students stress management skills and effective test-taking skills and attitudes.
8. Help your students understand that the best way to prepare for tests is to concentrate on learning what they need to know, without spending much time worrying about what will be on the test or how they will cope with anxiety in the test situation. See Chapter 9 for more on assessment.

The Value Side of Motivation

Whereas the expectancy aspects of motivation focus on performance (Can I complete this activity successfully? What will happen if I fail?), the value aspects focus on the reasons for engaging in the activity in the first place (Why should I care about this activity? What benefits will I get from engaging in it?) Students commonly report serious deficiencies in the value aspects of their social studies motivation. Even though social studies is about people and therefore should be highly interesting, students consistently rate it as their least favorite among the major school subjects. Heavy emphasis on memorization and regurgitation of miscellaneous facts is usually given as the reason.

Traditionally, teachers have been advised to address value questions either by offering incentives for good performance (extrinsic motivation) or by emphasizing content and activities that students find enjoyable (intrinsic motivation). Unfortunately, these approaches have only limited value if you want to teach social studies for understanding, appreciation, and life application.

Extrinsic approach. Rewards are popular because teachers enjoy giving them and students enjoy receiving them. However, they are often used more as behavior management tools than as motivational tools. Rewards are likely to have positive effects on motivation to

learn only under certain circumstances. First, it is important to deliver rewards in ways that provide students with informative feedback and call attention to significant achievements. You want students to think about applying themselves to their studies as worth doing because it leads to increases in knowledge and skills, not just because it can lead to extrinsic rewards.

Also, rewards can act as motivators only for those students who believe that they have a chance to get them. Too often, access to rewards (or to the most desirable rewards) is limited to high achievers. Learning of an opportunity to earn a reward by getting a high grade will be motivating to these students, but de-motivating to students who know that they have little chance to earn such a grade. Thus, you will need to individualize success criteria so that all students have equal (or at least reasonable) access to the rewards. An alternative that avoids these complications is to limit yourself to rewards given to the class as a whole (“I know that you all put in a lot of work on your projects, and I am very pleased with them. As a token of my appreciation for your efforts ...”). Such celebrations of everyone’s efforts and progress also are more in keeping with the spirit of a learning community.

Teacher praise and encouragement also are potential sources of extrinsic motivation for students, but again it is important to deliver them effectively. Students are likely to be motivated by sincere praise delivered privately or through notes written on returned assignments, but they may not appreciate being singled out publicly, especially for things that are not really significant achievements (such as sitting up straight and paying attention). Effective praise and encouragement are delivered privately; are focused on expressing appreciation and providing informative feedback rather than making judgments; and are focused on the effort and care that the students put into the work, on the gains in knowledge or skills that the achievement represents, or on the achievement’s more noteworthy features. Praise statements should not include attributions of successful performance to high intelligence or aptitude (“Wow—you’re really good at this!”), because students who become accustomed to interpreting successes as evidence of high aptitude will also begin to interpret any difficulties they experience as evidence that they lack aptitude or have reached the limits of their abilities.

Another commonly recommended extrinsic motivator is competition. It is true that the opportunity to compete, whether for prizes or merely for the satisfaction of winning, can add excitement to classroom activities. However, most motivational researchers oppose the use of competition or place heavy qualifications on its applicability. Participating in classroom activities already involves risking public failure, and a great deal of competition is already built into the grading system. Also, competition is even more salient and distracting than rewards for most students, so they are likely to pay more attention to who is winning or losing than to what they are supposed to be learning. Finally, a root problem with competition is that it creates losers as well as winners (and usually many more losers than winners). Losers of individual competitions, especially if they lose consistently, may suffer losses in confidence, self-esteem, and enjoyment of school. Members of losing teams may devalue one another and scapegoat those whom they hold responsible for the team’s loss.

For these reasons, we would discourage you from emphasizing competition as a motivational strategy. If you do use competition, minimize its risks by making sure that all students have an equal chance to win, that winning is determined primarily by degree of effort (and perhaps a degree of luck) rather than by level of ability, that attention is focused more on the learning than the competition, and that reactions to the outcome emphasize the positive (winners are congratulated but losers are not criticized or ridiculed; the accomplishments of the class as a whole, not just the winners, are acknowledged).

Extrinsic rewards may reinforce effort and persistence, but they do little to help students come to value the content and skills they are learning. In fact, if their use is mishandled, it can erode whatever intrinsic motivation the students may have for learning

the content or skills. If you offer and deliver rewards in ways that imply that the only reason that students engage in learning activities is to get rewards for doing so, it is natural for them to infer that these activities have no value in their own right. In addition, if you use rewards in ways that foster competition among individuals or subgroups in your class, you undermine the collaborative norms that you should be emphasizing as part of maintaining a learning community. In conclusion, extrinsic rewards have been oversold to teachers. They can be helpful, or at least not harmful, if used appropriately, but they will not help you to encourage students to value curricular content and learning activities. Their effects tend to be short-term and not supportive of progress toward major long-term goals.

Intrinsic approach. The intrinsic motivation approach is similarly limited. Emphasizing content that students are already familiar with and interested in, along with activities that they enjoy, will please them but not expand their horizons or even necessarily increase their appreciation for curriculum-related knowledge and skills. As a teacher, your primary responsibilities are to see that your students acquire the knowledge and skills they are expected to acquire at the grade level, not to see that they enjoy themselves. It is desirable that students find school activities interesting and enjoyable whenever this is compatible with your major instructional goals, but accomplishing these goals is your first order of business.

One way to accommodate students' interests and preferences while at the same time pursuing your instructional goals is to allow them choices when possible. If you were going to ask your students to write a biography or make a presentation about a country, for example, you could allow individuals to choose the persons or countries they would report about (perhaps providing a menu of resources to select from, to make sure that their choices are appropriate to their ages and prior knowledge levels).

Another intrinsic motivation strategy is to engage students in activities that they find enjoyable. For example, most students enjoy collaborating in pairs or small groups, and these cooperative learning formats are well suited to many social studies goals. Students also tend to enjoy activities that provide them with opportunities to use a wide variety of skills (e.g., conducting and reporting research) rather than requiring boring repetition (e.g., filling in blanks on a worksheet), as well as activities that allow them to create a product that they can point to and identify with (e.g., a display or report).

These preferences were expressed in one of our studies that involved interviewing college students about learning activities they remembered from K–12 social studies (Alleman & Brophy, 1993–1994). We coded the students' responses for what they said about the outcomes of the activities. Desirable outcomes were coded when they reported that an activity had produced interesting learning (e.g., enabled them to empathize with the people being studied and see things from their point of view). Negative outcomes were coded when the students disparaged the activities as pointless (e.g., learning about state birds) or as boring and repetitive (e.g., worksheets or assignments such as reading a chapter in a text and then answering questions about it).

The students frequently mentioned desirable outcomes, and never expressed negative ones, when describing thematic units (such as on pioneer life or a foreign country) that included a variety of information and activities, field trips, class discussion and debate activities, and pageant or role-enactment activities. They expressed less enthusiasm, but still generally positive reactions to simulation activities, research projects, construction projects, and lecture/presentation activities. In contrast, they frequently complained about boring, repetitive seatwork that had to be done individually and silently.

Other intrinsic motivation approaches involve adapting school content or activities to students' interests. For example, Hidi and Baird (1988) found that students' interest in texts was enhanced when the main ideas in the texts were elaborated through insertions that

featured one of the following motivation principles: *character identification* (information about people with whom the students could identify, such as inventors whose discoveries led to the knowledge under study); *novelty* (content that interested the students because it was new or unusual); *life theme* (connections to things that were important in their lives outside of school); and *activity level* (reference to intense activities or strong emotions).

People, fads, or events that are currently prominent in the news or the youth culture can be worked into everyday lessons as applications of the concepts being learned. For example, a teacher pointed out that the Ark of the Covenant described in an ancient history text was the same ark featured in the movie *Raiders of the Lost Ark*. Another teacher sparked interest in studying latitude and longitude by noting that the sunken remains of the Titanic can be located easily, even though they lie on the ocean floor hundreds of miles out to sea, because the discoverers fixed the location precisely using these coordinates.

Another way to incorporate student interest is to encourage students to ask questions and make comments about topics. This creates “teachable moments” that you can pursue by temporarily suspending a planned sequence of events in order to address issues raised by a student (which typically reflect interests shared by other students as well). It also is helpful to plan lessons and assignments that include divergent questions and opportunities for students to express opinions, make evaluations, or in other ways respond personally to the content.

You can stimulate students’ interest or whet their curiosity by posing questions or doing “set ups” that create a need to resolve some ambiguity or obtain more information about a topic. For example, prior to reading material about Russia, you might ask the students if they know how many time zones there are in Russia or how the United States acquired Alaska. It will be mind boggling for most students to discover that one country encompasses 11 time zones or that the United States purchased Alaska from Russia. Calling attention to facts like these can make the difference between just another reading assignment and an interesting learning experience.

You also can use questions to put students into an information-processing or decision-making mode as they begin to engage in an activity. For example, you might create suspense by inviting students to consider competing ideas about the causes of the Civil War, or indicate that the content that they are about to study contains information that appears to contradict what they currently “know.”

Surveys indicate that teachers’ beliefs about effective motivation strategies tend to emphasize intrinsic approaches: cooperative learning, stimulating tasks, choices, role play and simulations, projects, learning games, relating content to current events and students’ lives outside of school, hands-on activities, and personalized content. Unfortunately, teachers’ strategies typically focus on activities or involve adding interesting elements to content rather than helping students to develop appreciation for the content base itself. Many reported hands-on activities seem gratuitous—likely to generate interest but not lead to important learning. For example, Zahorik (1996) described a fifth-grade social studies unit on the 1950s that included singing Elvis Presley songs, impersonating Elvis, writing essays speculating on whether Elvis was still alive, and critiquing Elvis’s movies. Hands-on activities will not produce important learning unless they include minds-on features that engage students in thinking about big ideas.

Motivating students to learn. Mitchell (1993) distinguished between catching students’ interest and holding it. He found that motivational techniques such as presenting students with brainteasers or puzzles, allowing them to work on computers, or allowing them to work in groups were effective for catching initial interest, but not for holding that interest in ways that led to accomplishment of significant learning goals. The latter outcomes were associated with meaningful content (students could appreciate its

applications to life outside of school) and instructional methods that fostered involvement (students spent most of their time engaged in active learning and application activities, not just watching and listening). Other research reviewed by Brophy (2010) similarly concluded that sustained student motivation to learn curricular content and skills results from what Mitchell called “hold” factors. More specifically, the key to motivating students to learn is to structure the curriculum around big ideas and develop them, with emphasis on their connections and applications to life outside of school.

Students do not need to enjoy school activities in order to be motivated to learn from them, but they do need to perceive these activities as meaningful and worthwhile. Therefore, you will need to make sure that your curriculum content and learning activities are in fact meaningful and worthwhile, and develop the content and scaffold your students’ engagement in the activities in ways that enable them to see and appreciate their value.

In this regard, it is helpful to apply the notion of a zone of proximal development to motivation as well as learning. If the content domains and learning activities they encounter at school have been well selected, students can come to appreciate their value. However, exposure alone may not be enough. Just as it is important for you to scaffold the cognitive aspects of your students’ engagement in learning activities, it is also important for you to scaffold the motivational aspects. Besides conveying big ideas and modeling strategies for applying them, *convey reasons why these ideas are worth learning, explain when and why they might be used, and model how it looks and feels when we use them* (e.g., by expressing appreciation of growth in your own knowledge, artistry, or craftsmanship). Besides coaching by drawing attention to key points at each step in a learning process, provide goal reminders and encourage students’ appreciation for the learning domain and for their own developing knowledge and skills. Finally, besides providing feedback about the correctness of responses and how to avoid mistakes, call students’ attention to developments in their knowledge or skills, to signs of artistry or craftsmanship in their work, or to unique “signature” elements that reflect their personal style of operating in the domain.

Induce appreciation for a topic or activity by explaining why students should value it. Better yet, arrange for them to experience this themselves by engaging them with a question or problem that requires content for its solution. Much social studies content has value as grist for developing insights into the human condition or advances in personal identity and self-actualization. Stories about people in the past or in other cultures, for example, usually can be framed with reference to enduring dilemmas with which your students can identify. In addition, the stories can be rendered in ways that help students appreciate how the experiences of people from another time or place compare and contrast with their own experiences in insight-producing ways.

These and other considerations involved in addressing the value issues related to motivating students to learn will be elaborated in subsequent chapters. For now, bear in mind that even though most discussions of motivation emphasize praise and rewards or strategies for making learning fun, research findings point to structuring the content around big ideas developed, with emphasis on their connections and applications as the key to motivating students to learn.

The Social Context’s Effects on Motivation

The relationship between the social context and students’ motivation is straightforward: students will be more motivated to learn and better able to concentrate on doing so when the classroom climate is collaborative and supportive than when it is competitive and judgmental. This is one reason why we place so much emphasis on establishing a learning community in your classroom. See Table 2.2 for examples of extrinsic and intrinsic motivation.

TABLE 2.2 EXAMPLES OF EXTRINSIC VERSUS INTRINSIC MOTIVATION

Extrinsic	Intrinsic
<p>"Star Chart" for Good Behavior</p> <p>"Bucks" system whereby students earn pretend money to buy items in a classroom store for good behavior.</p>	<p>Students see the value for themselves and for their relationships with peers when behaving in pro-social ways.</p>
<p>Canceling recess for children who do not complete their work.</p>	<p>Students want to complete their work because there is an intended audience for it besides the teacher (e.g., a performance, a publication).</p>

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Embracing Cultural Diversity

Minority students and others whose family backgrounds may place them at risk for school failure do especially well with teachers who share warm, personal interactions with them but also hold high expectations for their academic progress, require them to perform up to their capabilities, and see that they progress as far and as fast as they are able. These teachers break through social-class differences, cultural differences, language differences, and other potential barriers to communication in order to form close relationships with at-risk students, but they use these relationships to maximize the students' academic progress, not merely to provide friendship or sympathy to them (Baker, 1998; Delpit, 1992; Siddle-Walker, 1992; Tucker, et al., 2002).

At-risk students also do especially well in classrooms that offer warm, inviting social environments. Therefore, help your students to value diversity, learn from one another, and appreciate different languages and traditions. Treat the cultures that they bring to school as assets that provide students with foundations of background knowledge to support their learning efforts and provide you with opportunities to enrich the curriculum for everyone. Think in terms of helping minority students to become fully bicultural rather than in terms of replacing one culture with another. If you are unfamiliar with a culture that is represented in your classroom, educate yourself by reading about it, talking with community leaders, visiting homes, and most importantly talking with students to learn about their past history and future aspirations.

For example, Moll (1992) interviewed the families of students enrolled in a bilingual education class to identify resources available in the community that might be capitalized upon at the school, which was located in a primarily Spanish-speaking minority community. He identified the following *funds of knowledge* possessed by members of these households: ranching and farming (horsemanship, animal husbandry, soil and irrigation systems, crop planting, hunting, tracking, dressing game); mining (timbering, minerals, blasting, equipment operation, and maintenance); economics (business, market values, appraising, renting and selling, loans, labor laws, building codes, consumer knowledge, accounting, sales); household management (budgets, child care, cooking, appliance repairs); material and scientific knowledge (construction, carpentry, roofing, masonry, painting, design and architecture); repairs (airplane, automobile, tractor, house maintenance); contemporary medicine (drugs, first-aid procedures, anatomy, midwifery); folk medicine (herbal knowledge, folk cures); and religion (catechism, baptisms, bible studies, moral knowledge and ethics).

Teachers can capitalize on these funds of knowledge whenever they connect with curriculum content, to personalize the curriculum for their students and occasionally to integrate parents intellectually into the life of the school. Opportunities for connecting the curriculum to the students' home backgrounds are often missed because instruction

stays too close to what is in the textbooks. For example, usually at least some students in a class, and frequently a great many, have parents who are police officers, firefighters, postal workers, and other service workers studied in “community helpers” lessons, but few teachers think to invite these parents to come to the classroom to talk about their jobs. Home-school connections are discussed in detail in Chapter 13.

Adapt your curricula to feature the cultures represented by your students. Modifications might include a somewhat different selection of content as well as treatment of many more topics as issues open to multiple perspectives rather than as bodies of factual information that admit to only a single interpretation. Expose students to literature or multimedia content sources that feature models who come from cultural groups represented in your classroom and portray these models not as stereotypes but as nuanced individuals with whom all students can identify. In addition, expose your students to actual, living models by arranging for classroom speakers, field trips, or current events discussions that will raise minority students’ consciousness of roles and accomplishments to which they might aspire.

Knapp (1995) analyzed ways in which teachers working in ethnically heterogeneous classrooms responded to the cultural diversity of their students. The most effective ones explicitly accommodated the students’ cultural heritages by communicating to them that their cultural backgrounds were not problems to be overcome but rather strengths to be acknowledged and drawn upon in schooling. For example, following is Knapp’s description of a bilingual teacher of a combined first- and second-grade class composed of a mixed population of Hispanic, African-American, and white students:

Mr. Callio holds high expectations for his students and demands strict accountability for the work assigned to them. He recognizes that his students do not arrive at school with all the skills he would like them to have and plans his instruction accordingly. At the same time, his approach builds in a respect for the strengths and backgrounds of the students in his class. For example, Mr. Callio’s classroom is alive with pictures from different parts of the world, showing the different ethnic, racial, and cultural groups represented in his students. One display reads “Yo soy Latin y orgulloso” (“I am Latin and proud of it”) in big letters surrounded by pictures of pyramids, indigenous Mesoamericans, and other Latino faces. Another reads “I am African American and proud” and displays pictures of African people, places, and artifacts. Mr. Callio argues that it is imperative to provide positive self-images and role models if a teacher expects students to be driven to succeed. Mr. Callio uses his Spanish extensively in the classroom—and not simply to help those students with limited English proficiency. Rather, he argues that Spanish is an important language to know and encourages his monolingual English speakers to try to learn it. One of the top students in the class, an African-American male, regularly tries to piece together Spanish sentences. (Knapp, 1995, p. 39)

Be mindful of the unique qualities of and challenges faced by English Language Learners (ELLs). We suggest the following: learn and draw upon the funds of knowledge that ELL students bring to the classroom; attempt to learn a few words or phrases in their home language and teach them to the rest of the students in the class; consider opportunities for ELL students to share aspects of their culture and personal experiences in social studies lessons; or invite family members to share traditions or personal experiences with the class. Once you have an understanding of the funds of knowledge they have, try to weave that knowledge and experience into social studies lessons when applicable and relevant.

ELLs may encounter various challenges with social studies instruction due to language, cultural, and political barriers. Cruz and Thornton (2010) offer strategies for working with these challenges effectively. Social studies lessons that rely primarily on text may be

difficult for some students. Since much of the content of elementary social studies relates to the United States, ELL students may not have the background knowledge of its history, geography, economic system, cultures, and political system. Cruz and Thornton (2010) recommend culturally sensitive pedagogy that might involve the following: selecting topics that are relevant to students' lives beyond school; drawing upon students' personal stories and experiences; using a variety of visual cues; and setting up listening centers to listen to recorded class discussions.

We suggest the following lesson, *Specialness* (Alleman and Brophy, 2003b). This is the second lesson in a unit on childhood, and its goal is to teach about both the common features of children and their unique qualities. The lesson focuses on the concepts of prejudice and discrimination, which can be a byproduct of ignorance about other ethnicities, cultures, and races.

Lesson 2 Specialness

Resources

- Teacher's childhood story, represented by photos on a timeline
- Teacher's photos illustrating preteen or adolescent, teenager, young adult, and adult, emphasizing unique features
- Teacher's footprint or handprint and/or other data that identified him or her in the hospital nursery
- Teacher's family picture
- Pictures and photos of children who look and dress very differently
- Magazine and catalogs to cut up for Activity
- See Important Information Sheet About Me

Children's Literature

Lewis, D., & Lewis, G. (1995). *When you were a baby*. Atlanta: Peachtree.
Middleton, D. (1999). *Dealing with discrimination*. New York: Rosen.

General Comments

The focus of this lesson will be the uniqueness of all children (who also have many things in common). Its richness will depend on input from the children and their families.

General Purposes or Goals

To help students develop knowledge of, understanding of, and appreciation for: (1) childhood around the world—similarities and uniquenesses; and (2) factors that contribute to specialness or uniqueness: inheritance, culture, environment, and so on.

Main Ideas to Develop

- Childhood is universal.
- Children everywhere go through a series of changes in their development (from infancy to adolescence) and they experience many changes physically, emotionally, behaviorally, intellectually, and so forth.
- While children all over the world are alike in many ways, each one is unique (e.g., fingerprints, footprints, voice, cells in the body, face, the way she or he thinks, feelings about things, talents, etc.).
- Discrimination is treating someone badly because he or she is different from you.
- Even as young school children, we can help get rid of discrimination.
- Prejudice is a negative opinion formed without knowing all of the facts.

Teaching Tips from Barbara

I divided this lesson into two parts. The first part involves children being born and growing and being unique. This part connected hand in hand with health lessons in our Human Growth and Development unit. We were able to meet the curriculum requirements for both areas in this one lesson. The second day I focused on the discrimination part of this lesson. I took the “I can help fight discrimination” part of the assessment and turned *it* into a class project. We wrote a pledge together listing ways to fight discrimination. We then published the list and everyone signed it. It became a living document that helped to direct our relationships and behavior.

Starting the Lesson

Share the results of the home assignment. Discuss similarities of all the students in the class (e.g., they all have gone through the stages of childhood—baby, toddler, preschool, early school years). Compare your time line with those of the students, underscoring the idea that even though you are older, you too experienced the same stages that they are experiencing. Explain that they will go through additional stages, just as you have (e.g., pre-teen or adolescent, teenager, young adult, etc.). Show pictures and photos of these stages. Underscore the idea that children everywhere go through these stages in development.

Suggested Lesson Discussion

[Read *When You Were a Baby* by Lewis and Lewis.] Babyhood occurs throughout the world. Some babies have green eyes while others have blue or brown eyes. Some babies have red hair; some have brown or black hair; and some have very little hair. Some have very fair skin and others have darker skin. Families are special groups of people who love and usually take care of their babies. Every child who is born is already a part of a family. Some babies have older brothers and sisters. Some babies will grow up to be big brothers or sisters. Some families have grandmothers, grandfathers, aunts, and uncles. No family is exactly like yours.

While all children begin as babies, each is special. [Return to your time line accompanied by the visuals and words, only this time, emphasize your unique features. Show photos of your family members, pointing out some of your inherited features (specially shaped nose, eye color, hair color and texture, etc.). Show your footprint, handprint, or other data that identified you *in* the hospital nursery. Continue by explaining how you are unique within the context of other family members (e.g., you have an older sister who is blonde like your aunt. She is also very musical while you were much more athletic as a child, etc.).]

[Then continue by showing pictures of children who look and dress very differently than your students do and introduce the concept of discrimination.] *Discrimination* means treating people badly just because they look or act different. Sometimes only a person’s feelings are hurt, but often the results are much worse. Sometimes people *get* teased, or left out at games or parties. Sometimes they are physically injured. Unfortunately, the more different from others a person looks, speaks, or acts, the more likely it is that he or she will be treated unfairly. [Share the book *Dealing with Discrimination* by Middleton. As you read *it*, encourage the students to listen for examples of discrimination.]

Disliking others for no good reason is *called prejudice*. When we act on prejudice we often miss out on getting to know others, learning from them, and possibly developing friendships.

[Talk about the examples of discrimination that were highlighted in the book you read. Then discuss other examples that class members may have experienced and the personal feelings associated with them. As a class, discuss what members can do to stop discrimination and show that differences are valued.]

Activity

Using a class discussion format, have students complete a chart like the following one to illustrate the key points of the lesson with words and pictures gleaned from magazines and catalogs. Encourage sketches and drawings to fill in the gaps.

Children all Over the World Are Alike	Children all Over the World Are Unique
Begin as babies	Handprint
When they are born, they are already members of a family	Footprint
Have eyes, ears, hair, <i>etc.</i>	Eye shape
Need adults to take care of them when they are babies	Nose shape
	Family members—no two families are alike

After completing this activity, as a class write a group journal entry that begins, “We can help *get rid of* discrimination by _____.”

Summarize

- Childhood is experienced around the world.
- Children all over the world experience many of the same changes, yet every child has unique features.
- Prejudice is a negative opinion formed about someone without knowing or examining all the facts.
- Discrimination is treating someone badly because she or he is different from you.
- Even as school children in the early grades, we can help get rid of discrimination.

Assessment

Have each student complete a narrative and provide illustrations that respond to the following statements.

1. Children everywhere are like me in the following ways:
2. I am unique in the following ways:
3. I can help fight discrimination (treating someone badly because he or she is different) by:

Home Assignment

The goal is to think about sameness and specialness or uniquenesses of children. Encourage students to discuss what they learned about sameness and specialness regarding childhood around the world. Then, have the family complete the Important Information Sheet About Me. The results will be shared with classmates.

Dear Parents,

We are learning about specialness. Attached is an Important Information Sheet About Me that we would like your child to complete with a family member’s assistance. The results will be shared during our social studies class. Thank you for your help!

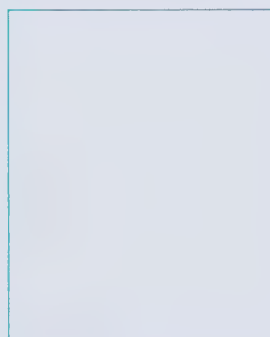
Sincerely,

IMPORTANT INFORMATION SHEET ABOUT ME

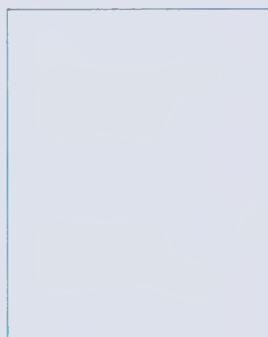
Please complete the survey with at least one member of your family. Be ready to share the results with the class.

I am unique because _____

Here are pictures of my early childhood:



BABY



TODDLER



PRESCHOOL



EARLY SCHOOL YEARS

Some things my family wants to share about me:

Examples:

I weighed _____ when I was born.

My first word was _____.

My favorite toy when I was a baby was _____.

We encourage family members to have a conversation about specialness and to list several examples of your child's specialness.

Important Information Sheet About Me Example

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Supporting Motivation of Low Achievers

Some students struggle to keep up due to limitations of ability or because they have disabilities that impede their progress, or because they are bored due to lack of challenge. A strong learning community emphasizing high expectations with strong socio-emotional and instructional supports can go a long way in helping all students realize success. Tools such as co-constructing visual prompts for self monitoring, social stories, strategic groupings for specific tasks, and peer mentoring are examples of these supports.

Typically classroom teachers who build strong learning communities exhibit patience, encouragement, and support. However, with the multiple classroom challenges that exist, it is too easy to drift into maladaptive patterns. Brophy (2010) identifies 18 ways some teachers communicate low expectations to low achievers. Having been documented in various studies and reviewed by Good and Brophy (2008), they include the following:

How Some Teachers Communicate Low Expectations to Their Low Achievers:

1. Waiting less time for low achievers to answer a questions (before giving the answer of calling on someone else).
2. Giving answers to low achievers or calling on someone else rather than trying to improve their responses by giving clues or repeating or rephrasing questions.
3. Inappropriate reinforcement by rewarding inappropriate behavior or innocent answers by low achievers.
4. Criticizing low achievers more often for failure.
5. Praising low achievers less often for success.
6. Failing to give feedback following the public responses of low achievers.
7. Generally paying less attention to low achievers or interacting with them less frequently.
8. Calling on them less often to respond to questions, or asking them only easier, non-analytic questions.
9. Seating them farther away from the teacher.
10. Generally demanding less from them, such as attempting to teach them less than they are capable of learning, accepting low-quality or even incorrect responses from them and treating them as if they were correct responses, or substituting misplaced sympathy or gratuitous praise for sustained teaching that ultimately leads to mastery.
11. Interacting with low achievers more privately than publicly and monitoring and structuring their activities more closely.
12. Giving high achievers but not low achievers the benefit of the doubt in grading tests or assignments.
13. Being less friendly in interactions with low achievers, including less smiling and fewer other nonverbal indicators of support.
14. Providing briefer and less informative answers to their questions.
15. Interacting with them in ways that involve less eye contact and other non-verbal communication of attention and responsiveness (e.g., forward lean, positive head nodding).
16. Less use of effective but time-consuming instructional methods with low achievers when time is limited.
17. Less acceptance and use of low achievers' ideas.
18. Limiting low achievers to an impoverished curriculum, such as low-level and repetitive content, factual recitation rather than lesson-extending discussion, drill and practice rather than application and higher-level thinking. (Brophy, 2010, pp. 108–109).

Brophy (2010) points out that some of these differences are due to the behavior of the students while some forms of differential treatment may represent appropriate

individualizing of instruction. Teachers who are aware of their practices and are willing to modify them as needed can positively influence their students' motivational levels. As students learn more about their classmates' personal characteristics, including any learning, physical, or emotional challenges, and discuss mutual ways of supporting one another, their influence on student success will also become evident.

Supporting Motivation of Cognitively and Linguistically Gifted

Some students struggle to stay engaged in a lesson while others fail to turn in their assigned work simply because they do not view the content as interesting or because they do not see the task as challenging or valuable. Most strategies recommended for gifted learners to offset these behaviors are suitable for all learners—but often it is a matter of degree. For example, in a study by Cooper and McIntyre (1994) focusing on effective teaching, students generally preferred methods that produced high levels of imaginative and practical involvement. Among them were storytelling, which they found mentally engaging, drama and role play, and visual stimuli such as photographs and videos, whole group and small group discussions, and opportunities to brainstorm and problem solve in collaborative settings.

Incorporate Game-Like Features

Incorporating game-like features into learning activities when they match the lesson goals can add challenge and promote interest. With a bit of imagination, ordinary assignments can be transformed into “test yourself” challenges. Ask students to find a short cut for a tedious task or solve a mystery by discovering how a set of artifacts such as photographs that seem unrelated actually have something in common (McKenzie, 1975). For example, provide pictures of pioneers on a frontier, the Wright Brothers with their airplane, an astronaut, African-American students integrating a segregated school, and a scientist in a lab working on stem cell research. What theme runs throughout? Materials that provide sets of clues such as multiple historical accounts of a single event, data that can be rearranged to tell a story, or game-like activities that involve suspense and simulations that involve intellectual challenge are examples that are engaging and add interest and promote higher-order thinking (Brophy, 2010, pp. 166–167). All members can participate, while gifted students can take the lead in enacting them. Finding learning opportunities that can enrich the curricular topic and promote meaning are preferable to those selected to address an individual's interest because all class members can benefit from the results as a part of their units under study.

Homework

Frequently, gifted students' grade reports are surprisingly low because of challenges they have with homework such as motivational factors, time management, and limited organizational proficiency. Homework should be optimally challenging instead of tedious (Alleman, Brophy, Knighton, Ley, Botwinski, & Middlestead, 2010). Assignments should stretch their thinking yet with enough structure so they will feel confident and can be successful. The tasks should allow for personalizing, always with an eye on students' assets.

Undoubtedly some gifted students, especially those who dutifully do the traditional homework and are concerned about maintaining their grades, are initially tentative about a shift. Gradually help them understand that these more contemporary assignments can do much more than meet the demands of the teacher and satisfy the requirements of the assignment. Integrating students' assets and channeling their leadership roles can empower

them to get more personally involved in their learning and realize the intrinsic reward of sharing the results with their classmates, which in turn enhances their social skills.

The Teacher's Role

The teacher's role pervades the process of building a learning community, implementing cooperative learning strategies, and motivating students to learn. It includes but is not limited to:

1. Creating a climate of mutual caring.
2. Teaching specific cooperative learning skills and techniques.
3. Showing sincere interest in each student's responses, ideas, experiences, and work products.
4. Eliciting students' input on a regular basis.
5. Giving reasons and thoughtful explanations regarding socio-emotional, behavioral, and academic issues.
6. Giving students the chance to examine and express the importance of what they do.
7. Providing students with opportunities to participate actively in the evaluation of their academic work.
8. Minimizing their need for extrinsic rewards and their fear of embarrassment.
9. Celebrating their successes while also engaging with them in ongoing dialogue and reflection regarding their individual and class development.
10. Planning a curriculum that consists of networks of connected content structured around big ideas, then developing this content with emphasis on its applications to life outside of school.
11. Sharing your own background and experiences to model connections to the topics you teach.

Many of the above elements apply especially to powerful social studies teaching. In this role, the teacher has the added responsibilities of building appreciations related to the human condition and civic efficacy, connecting the unit content to life in the classroom and outside of school, and exposing students to learning resources that reflect multiple perspectives and connect to diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds.

Technology Tips

Rethinking Schools is a nonprofit organization dedicated to issues of social justice in schools. Visit its website at www.rethinkingschools.org for ideas and resources.

Summary

A collaborative learning community will be most effective when it is:

1. Goal-oriented.
2. Pitched at the appropriate level of difficulty for the academic and socio-emotional levels of the students.
3. Integrated into the total school day as a way of life in the classroom.
4. Deliberate in shaping democratic activities and actions to ensure that they support progress toward overall social understanding and civic efficacy goals, as well as relating to the unit goals that are linked to the social science disciplines.
5. Maintained and monitored on a regular basis.
6. Culminated in producing students who understand, appreciate, and are willing to apply social

studies concepts, processes, and actions to democratic life outside the classroom.

A productive learning community draws on all of the senses, is established on the premise of democracy, and shapes constructive human interactions. At the same time, it provides a natural framework for acquiring meaning in the social studies. Establishing and maintaining your classroom as a collaborative learning community will provide an ideal context to motivate students to learn and develop attitudes, beliefs, and dispositions that reflect the goals of preparing students for citizenship in a culturally diverse, democratic society. Whether or not it includes formal structures like those established by Mrs. Paul, your learning community should feature rules, routines, expectations, and social interaction patterns that foster respectful and egalitarian discourse and frequent collaboration in constructing understandings.

Approaches to teaching that can contribute to the development of the classroom community include modeling and explaining key attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors; beginning with a unit on childhood that provides many opportunities for students to learn about their

classmates' personal characteristics and home backgrounds; frequent opportunities for students to work collaboratively in pairs or small groups; and emphasis on classroom management and student motivation strategies that emphasize collaboration over competition. Whole-class activities should feature assertive but respectful interaction in which the emphasis is on discussing opinions with reference to relevant arguments and evidence as a means toward negotiating common understandings.

A learning community provides a supportive atmosphere that enables all students to focus on developing knowledge and skills without worrying about failure or embarrassment. Other keys to supporting students' motivation to learn include maintaining an appropriate level of challenge (students can succeed with reasonable effort) and focusing the curriculum on content that they can appreciate and value as worth learning and is applicable to their lives outside of school. With respect to both learning and motivation, teachers need to work in the zone of proximal development, be ever mindful of the range of student assets, and provide their students with whatever structuring and scaffolding they may need in order to accomplish the intended goals.



TeachSource Video Cases

- **Bilingual Education: An Elementary Two-Way Immersion Program** features two teachers and their students who are involved in a two-way bilingual program (in English and Spanish).
- **Cooperative Learning in the Elementary Grades: Jigsaw Model** showcases the jigsaw model in practice, using the topic of ancient Olympics.
- **Culturally Responsive Teaching: A Multicultural Lesson for Elementary Students** focuses on incorporating multicultural education within a writing lesson.
- **Diversity: Teaching in a Multiethnic Classroom** features a second grade classroom in which students collaborate on a project in which they produce Japanese Kamishibai books.

As you view the videos, consider the following questions: Does the teaching in these videos meet the needs of all learners in the classroom, and if so, how? If not, why not? Does the teaching and learning in these videos reflect the kind of learning community you would like in your classroom? Why? Why not? How would you adapt the practices for social studies lessons in your classroom? The videos are available in the Education Media Library at www.CengageBrain.com.

Reflective Questions

1. The Core Democratic Values are being emphasized in many state and local social studies curricula. What roles and functions do you think they can play within the context of building a learning community?
2. How does group work contribute to building a learning community?
3. Learning community is often referred to as the informal social studies curriculum. How would you explain this? Provide examples with your response.
4. There is evidence in the literature that fostering a learning community is loosely coupled with student achievement. How would you explain this? Provide examples.
5. If your priorities are to develop students who have intrinsic motivation within a learning community, what will your classroom sound like? Look like? Feel like? Cite concrete examples.
6. Select an upcoming social studies project or robust instructional activity. Explain Expectancy \times Value Theory.
7. The literature suggests that subscribing to an asset model when building community and providing powerful teaching and learning are keys for student success. What does that mean to you? Provide examples to illustrate.
8. How will diverse groups of students enrich your learning community?

Your Turn: Building a Learning Community in Your Classroom

Observe several classrooms and look for evidence that the students are functioning as a learning community. Attempt to interview each teacher afterwards. If you did not see much evidence of a learning community, seek explanations. Where learning communities were successfully implemented, talk with the teachers about their insights—and how they have actualized their visions.

If you have your own classroom, begin by asking someone to serve as an observer to determine what your classroom looks like, sounds like, and feels like to an outsider. The data can serve as a powerful informant and useful planning tool as you develop your community.

Sample Observation Schedule

- *Is student input elicited on a regular basis? (Examples?)*
- *Are students provided with choices where appropriate? (Examples?)*
- *Does the teacher help students view learning activities as opportunities to increase knowledge and skills? (Evidence?)*
- *Does the teacher motivate using an intrinsic reward approach? (Examples?)*
- *Does the teacher focus on big ideas as a way to motivate students? (Examples?)*
- *Does the teacher foster appreciation for a topic or activity? (Evidence?)*
- *Does the teacher give reasons and thoughtful explanations regarding socio-emotional, behavioral, and academic issues? (Evidence?)*
- *Do students get a chance to share and express the importance of what they do? (Evidence?)*
- *Do students participate actively in the evaluation of their behavior? Of their academic work? (Evidence?)*
- *Do they celebrate their successes while engaging in ongoing dialogue and reflection regarding individual and class development? How?*
- *How would you characterize the climate of the classroom?*
- *Does the climate reflect mutual caring? (Evidence?)*
- *Do you feel like you are “living” in a community? (Evidence?)*
- *Is there a sense of shared values? (Evidence?)*
- *Are specific cooperative learning skills and techniques being developed? How?*
- *Is there a sense of high expectations regarding positive behaviors and academic success? (Evidence?)*
- *Is there evidence that student assets are recognized and attended to on a regular basis?*
- *Does the teacher show sincerity and interest in each student’s responses, ideas, experiences, and work products? (Evidence?)*

After reviewing this chapter and observing in at least one classroom, take a sheet of paper, fold it (vertically) in half. On one side list things that you can do as a teacher to build a learning community in your classroom, and on the other side list behaviors (such as distributing candy to reward good conduct) to avoid

because they will detract from your learning community goals. Find a peer who would also be willing to participate in this exercise. After you have both compiled your lists, discuss them.

After this preliminary activity, review your list and add or delete if needed. Then find a quiet spot and, using the list as a starting point, spend at least an hour creating your vision for your classroom learning community (use drawings, pictures, and such if you find this helpful). Then, put your statement aside, but work on it for 30 minutes every day for a week. Finally, spend time developing a long-range plan for launching the learning community in your classroom. Remember, it is a yearlong process. Accumulated experiences will expand your understanding and build your confidence in implementing the learning community approach to democratic life in classrooms, yet you will begin anew each year as you meet a new class of students and journey through the process together.

Review the key points made in the chapter, noting especially those that were new to you. Remember that the maintenance component of your community is absolutely essential. Your efforts will be realized gradually. What you lose in instructional time during the first few weeks of school as you build your community will be returned tenfold by the end of the year.

After the key elements of the community are in place, an introductory unit focusing on childhood/adolescence can serve as a powerful springboard for learning a lot about your students, engaging them in very personal ways, and at the same time introducing them to the historical, geographic, economic, and cultural frames for their yearlong program. Select from the following topics to get started in planning your unit. You might consider working with a peer.

Elements of Childhood/Adolescence

Specialness

Children Around the World

Birthdays

Rites of Passage

Children and Work

Schools—Past and Present

Children as Consumers

Adults Provide for Children's Needs

Childhood Talents and Interests

Children Make a Difference

Look for places where cooperative learning is appropriate. Keep a reflective journal as you teach the unit. See Alleman and Brophy (2003b).

HOW DO I SELECT POWERFUL GOALS AND POWERFUL CONTENT?

TEACHER VOICE

Danielle Doski, First-Year Teacher

Among the long list of responsibilities assigned to me as a teaching intern in a third grade classroom, my masters-level professors would continually push my peers and me to reflect on the content we selected to teach our students. One exercise we would frequently engage in was digging into our memories as elementary or middle school students when determining how we could create a positive and productive learning community within all of our classrooms. Certainly no one dwelled on the textbooks lessons; instead, it was the out-of-the-box projects and activities that intrigued and pushed us to work harder than we thought was possible. I can still remember dressing up as the Wright brothers with a friend and teaching my classmates about what contributions these brothers made to society. It really personalized learning for me. It was in these moments of reflection that I

decided I wanted to create units that students would remember years later.

Achieving “powerful social studies teaching” can appear overwhelming and impossible. There is no way that teachers, even with a social studies major, will know in depth *all* of the content they will be teaching; nor should a teacher pretend to know everything. But teachers should learn the content they are teaching by diving into the material themselves, modeling a spirit of investigation to their students. In doing so, they will be able to determine the powerful ideas that are most important and worth spending time teaching.

© Keith Knighton

Karen Terry, Experienced Teacher

When I began teaching fifth grade social studies, 11 years ago, I was determined to make a lasting impact on my students. I was not going to provide them with the useless information I was handed some years prior. Well, as everyone knows being a first-year teacher is very overwhelming. I found myself scrambling to get in everything that was required of me each day. My plan for teaching social studies with some “oomph” had fallen by the wayside quite quickly. The curriculum was in front of me, along with a healthy-sized textbook. This would be my saving grace. All I’d need to do was go chapter by chapter with my students, reading the sections, and of course answering the questions (in complete sentences!) at the end of each chapter. There was little time for class discussion since I had so much material to cover in such a short amount of time. My success (or so I thought) was when my students passed the test that accompanied each chapter. You know the kind of test I’m talking about ... mostly recall questions, maybe some true/false, matching, and of course those multiple choice questions that have at least two ridiculous answers. At that time, and for at least the next five years, I really thought I was providing my students with a solid social studies education. I could not have been more mistaken.

It took me several years to realize that the run-of-the-mill textbook should not be the grounds for any curriculum, especially social studies. I had fallen victim to a textbook driven curriculum, where students were required to memorize the trivial and insignificant events and ideas. Textbooks are not specific to one’s own state standards or benchmarks. The information provided can be quite superficial and can tend to present one-sided or even biased information. I have found it best to corroborate the information from the text with at least two or three other (reliable) sources. This allows students to learn that varying perspectives are evident in history, and allows them to make their own judgments based the information. I discovered that when I limited the time spent in the textbook and looked to other resources (primary/secondary sources, video clips, and so forth.), the students were more engaged in the lesson therefore making it more meaningful to them.

In this chapter, you will learn that social studies teaching and learning is most powerful when it is meaningful, integrative, value-based, challenging and active. I strive to make my lessons *meaningful* by not only indentifying intended outcomes of each lesson, but providing students with a deeper understanding of important ideas. I *integrate* social studies quite easily into other content areas, such as English Language Arts. Students are able to begin making those necessary connections when they see historical ideas outside of the social studies curriculum. *Value-based* to me is when students uncover biases and varying perspectives in history. They need to learn to make their own judgments of historical events based on what they have learned. To facilitate this, I’ve recently started administering DBEs (document based exercises) to my students. The

challenging component for students when completing a DBE is to first examine multiple documents/sources, next make inferences (which could be based on prior knowledge) about the documents, and last answer an in-depth written response question. The final quality of powerful teaching, *active*, can be difficult, but you can make your lessons both minds-on and hands-on through thorough and thoughtful preparation. You want to make each lesson one from which students will retain important ideas by playing an active role in their learning.

A curriculum is not an end in itself but a means, a tool for accomplishing educational goals. These goals are learner outcomes—the knowledge, skills, attitudes, values, and dispositions to action that one wishes to develop in students. Ideally, curriculum planning and implementation decisions will be driven by these goals. Each component—the basic content, the ways that this content is represented and explicated to students, the questions that will be asked, the types of teacher-student and student-student discourse that will occur, the activities and assignments, and the methods that will be used to assess progress and grade performance—will be included because it is believed to be needed as a means for moving students toward accomplishment of the major goals. The goals are the reason for the existence of the curriculum, and beliefs about what is needed to accomplish them should guide each step in curriculum planning and implementation.

Today's social studies textbook series feature broad but shallow coverage of a great range of topics and skills. Lacking coherence of flow or structuring around key ideas developed in depth, they are experienced as parades of disconnected facts and isolated skills exercises. These problems have evolved as an unintended consequence of publishers' efforts to satisfy state and district curricular guidelines that feature long lists of topics and skills to be covered rather than succinct statements of major goals to be accomplished. If teachers use the textbooks and their accompanying ancillary materials and follow the manuals' lesson development instructions, the result will be a reading/recitation/seatwork curriculum geared toward memorizing disconnected knowledge and practicing isolated skills. Nevertheless, this is what many teachers do, because most elementary teachers and many secondary teachers who are assigned to teach social studies courses have not had enough social studies preparation even to allow them to develop a coherent view of what social education is all about, let alone a rich base of social education knowledge and an associated repertoire of pedagogical techniques. Acting on the assumption that the series has been developed by experts far more knowledgeable about social education purposes and goals than they are, often teachers tend to concentrate on the procedural mechanics of implementation when planning lessons and activities, without giving much thought to their purposes or how they might fit into the larger social education program.

The first of these two italicized paragraphs summarizes the classical view of curriculum development as a goal-oriented process. The second paragraph summarizes findings of recent research on the status of social studies. The contrasts between the two paragraphs reflect major challenges that we see in contemporary social education.

An important reason for these challenges is that publishers of social studies textbooks and the teachers who depend on them have lost the forest for the trees—they have lost sight of the major, long-term goals that reflect the purposes of social education and should drive the development and enactment of social studies curricula. Textbook teachers' editions, pacing guides, lesson plans downloaded from the Internet, and other contemporary materials often emphasize knowledge and skill-oriented "goals" that are better described as objectives or behavioral indicators. They typically refer to disconnected facts or skill sets that, when taught in isolation, are not retained. Because of how they are taught—"grill and drill"—it does not even occur to students that they could be applied in other settings.

This approach lowers the level of intention and instruction. Recalling the names of the states and capitals or battles and generals, naming the longest river in the world, or listing the steps in how a bill becomes a law are of little importance unless these facts are used in consort with explanations associated with big ideas.

Consequently, we are calling for a return to the notion of developing curricula as a means to accomplish major goals with an inclusion of knowledge/skill performance indicators where appropriate. To be most valuable for curriculum planning, these goals will need to be phrased in terms of intended student outcomes—capabilities and dispositions to be developed in students and used in their lives inside and outside of school, both now and in the future.

We will consider two connected sets of goals as guides for planning curriculum and instruction in elementary social studies. The first set is generic to powerful teaching in any school subject, and the second set is specific to social studies.

Generic Subject-Matter Goals: Understanding, Appreciation, and Life Application

The *academic disciplines* are a means of generating and systematizing knowledge. The *school subjects* that draw from them are a means of preparing students for life in our society by equipping them with essential knowledge, skills, values, and dispositions. We want students not just to learn what we teach them in school, but to access and use it in appropriate application situations. These goals will not be met if students merely memorize disconnected bits of information long enough to pass tests, then forget most of what they "learned."

Consequently, in planning curriculum and instruction in any school subject, it is important to emphasize the goals of understanding, appreciation, and life application. *Understanding* means that students learn both the individual elements in a network of related content and the connections among them so that they can explain the content in their own words. True understanding goes beyond the ability to define concepts or supply facts. It involves making connections between new learning and prior knowledge, subsuming the new learning within larger networks of knowledge and recognizing at least some of its potential applications. For example, in a unit on government and a lesson on voting, a goal might be to help students understand voting and how the process works in the United States.

Appreciation means that students value the learning because they recognize that there are good reasons for learning it. Along with potential practical applications,

these reasons include the roles that the learning might play in enhancing the quality of the learners' lives. In the case of social studies, students might appreciate the value of their learning for helping them understand how the world as we know it came to be and what is occurring in it now, as well as for helping them make personal and civic decisions. They also might come to appreciate their own developing understandings—to take pride in seeing how what they have learned applies to their own lives, to appreciate their attainment of new insights, or to enjoy interpreting or predicting current events or enhancing their knowledge by reading or watching programs on social issues. In a unit on money and a lesson focusing on children donating money to help others, an appreciation goal might be to help students appreciate what it means to be a good citizen by learning about the what, why, and how of age-appropriate social actions that they can undertake in and out of school by actually donating time and money.

Life application goals are accomplished to the extent that students retain their learning in a form that makes it usable when needed in other contexts. Too often, the knowledge taught in social studies is not applicable in life outside of school, or if it, is the potential life applications are not made explicit. This is why we encourage you to include homework as a part of your overall planning. See Chapter 13 for a discussion of meaningful homework. Provide life application assignments that encourage students to interact with their family and community members to enhance the meaningfulness of the big ideas/skills that are introduced and discussed in the classroom. For example, when teaching about absolute and relative locations, design home assignments that call for students to discuss with family members how and when these big ideas apply to situations they encounter. (For example, in planning for the number of hours required for travel and the means of transportation, identifying the relative location of the destination is probably all that is needed, but if you need to have a package delivered to a specific individual, the absolute location would be necessary.)


Research on Teaching for Understanding

Throughout the rest of the book, we will use the term “teaching for understanding” as shorthand for “teaching for understanding, appreciation, and life application of subject-matter knowledge.” Recently, there has been a confluence of theorizing, research, and publication of guidelines by professional organizations, all focusing on what is involved in teaching for understanding. Analyses of these efforts have identified a set of principles that are common to most if not all of them (Bransford, Brown, & Cocking, 1999). These common elements, which might be considered components in a model of good subject-matter teaching, include the following:

1. The curriculum is designed to equip students with knowledge, skills, values, and dispositions that they will find useful both inside and outside of school.
2. Instructional goals emphasize developing student expertise within an application context, emphasizing conceptual understanding of knowledge and self-regulated application of skills.
3. The curriculum balances breadth with depth by addressing limited content but developing this content sufficiently to foster conceptual understanding.
4. The content is organized around a limited set of powerful ideas (basic understandings and principles).
5. The teacher's role is not just to present information but also to scaffold and respond to students' learning efforts.
6. The students' role is not just to absorb or copy information but also to actively make sense and construct meaning.

7. Students' prior knowledge about the topic is elicited and used as a starting place for instruction, which builds on accurate prior knowledge but also stimulates conceptual change if necessary.
8. Activities and assignments feature tasks that call for decision making, problem solving, or critical thinking, not just memory or reproduction.
9. Higher-order thinking skills are not taught as a separate skills curriculum. Instead, they are developed in the process of teaching subject-matter knowledge within application contexts that call for students to relate what they are learning to their lives outside of school.
10. The teacher creates a social environment in the classroom that could be described as a learning community featuring discourse or dialogue designed to promote understanding.

These generic goals and key features involved in teaching school subjects for understanding are implied in what we say about good teaching in the rest of this book. In addition, we emphasize the goals of powerful social studies teaching as identified in a position statement published by the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) (2010).



Establishing Learning Orientations and Goal-Oriented Assessment

Principle 4: Establishing Learning Orientations: Teachers can prepare students for learning by providing an initial structure to clarify intended outcomes and cue desired learning strategies. Teachers introduce students to the powerful goals and content they select for their students to motivate students to learn the content and to provide students a “roadmap” of what they will be learning. *Principle 11: Goal-oriented Assessment: The teacher uses a variety of formal and informal assessment methods to monitor progress toward learning goals.* The goals and content the teacher selects should align with the assessments used to measure student growth. Alignment of activities, goals, and assessment is critical for making valid determinations of students' learning of the content. Please see Chapter 14 for a more in-depth description of each principle.

Social Studies Goals: Social Understanding and Civic Efficacy

Powerful social studies teaching helps students develop social understanding and civic efficacy. *Social understanding* is integrated knowledge of the social aspects of the human condition: how they have evolved over time, the variations that occur in different physical environments and cultural settings, and emerging trends that appear likely to shape the future. *Civic efficacy* is readiness and willingness to assume citizenship responsibilities. It is rooted in social studies knowledge and skills, along with related values (such as concern for the common good) and dispositions (such as an orientation toward confident participation in civic affairs).

The 2008 NCSS Position Statement identifies *Five Qualities of Powerful Teaching* necessary for social studies teaching and learning to accomplish its social understanding and civic efficacy goals: meaningful, integrative, value-based, challenging, and active (NCSS, 2008).

Meaningful. The content selected for emphasis is worth learning because it promotes progress toward important social understanding and civic efficacy goals, and teaching

methods help students to see how the content relates to those goals. As a result, students' learning efforts are motivated by appreciation and interest, not just by accountability and grading systems. Students acquire dispositions to care about what is happening in the world around them and to use the thinking frameworks and research skills of social science professionals to gather and interpret information. As a result, social learning becomes a lifelong interest and a basis for informed social action.

Instruction emphasizes depth of development of important ideas within appropriate breadth of topic coverage. Rather than cover too many topics superficially, the teacher covers limited topics and focuses this coverage around the most important content.

The significance of the content is emphasized in presenting it to students and developing it through activities. New topics are framed with reference to where they fit within the big picture, and students are alerted to their citizenship implications. Students are asked to relate new knowledge to prior knowledge, to think critically about it, and to use it to construct arguments or make informed decisions.

Teachers' questions promote understanding of important ideas and stimulate thinking about their potential implications. Teacher-student interactions emphasize thoughtful discussion of connected major themes, not rapid-fire recitation of miscellaneous bits of information.

Meaningful learning activities and assessment strategies focus students' attention on the most important ideas embedded in what they are learning. The teaching emphasizes authentic activities and assessment tasks—opportunities for students to engage in the sorts of applications of content that justify the inclusion of that content in the curriculum in the first place. For example, instead of labeling a map, students might plan a travel route and sketch landscapes that a traveler might see on the route. Instead of copying the Bill of Rights, students might discuss or write about its implications for particular court cases. Instead of filling in a blank to complete a statement of a principle, students might use the principle to make predictions about a case example or to guide their strategies in a simulation game.

The teacher is reflective in planning, implementing, and assessing instruction. Reflective teachers work within state and district guidelines, but they adapt and supplement those guidelines and their instructional materials in ways that support their students' social education needs. In particular, they select and represent content to students in ways that connect it with the students' interests and with local history, cultures, and issues.

Integrative. Powerful social studies teaching crosses disciplinary boundaries to address topics in ways that promote social understanding and civic efficacy. Its content is anchored by themes, generalizations, and concepts drawn from the social studies foundational disciplines. However, these are supplemented by ideas drawn from the arts, sciences, and humanities, from current events, and from local examples and students' experiences.

Powerful social studies teaching is also integrative across time and space, connecting with past experiences and looking ahead to the future. It helps students to appreciate how aspects of the social world function, not only in their local community and in the contemporary United States but also in the past and in other cultures.

Powerful social studies teaching also integrates knowledge, skills, beliefs, values, and dispositions to action. In particular, it teaches skills as tools for applying content in natural ways. The teaching includes effective use of technology when it can add important dimensions to learning. Students may acquire information through films, videos, websites, and other electronic media, and they may use computers to compose, edit, and illustrate research reports. Live or computer-based simulations allow students to apply important ideas in authentic decision-making contexts.

Finally, powerful social studies teaching can be integrated across the curriculum. It provides opportunities for students to read and study text materials, appreciate art and

literature, communicate orally and in writing, observe and take measurements, develop and display data, and in other ways to conduct inquiry and synthesize findings using knowledge and skills taught in other school subjects. It is important, however, to see that these integrative activities support progress toward social understanding and civic efficacy goals.

Value-based. Powerful social studies teaching considers the ethical dimensions of topics, so it provides an arena for reflective development of concern for the common good and application of social values. Students are made aware of potential social policy implications and taught to think critically and make value-based decisions about related social issues.

Such teaching encourages recognition of opposing points of view, respect for well-supported positions, sensitivity to cultural similarities and differences, and a commitment to social responsibility and action. It recognizes the reality and persistence of tensions but promotes positive human relationships built on understanding and willingness to search for the common good.

Challenging. Students are expected to strive to accomplish the instructional goals through thoughtful participation in lessons and activities and careful work on assignments. The teacher encourages the class to function as a learning community, using reflective discussion to work collaboratively to deepen understandings of the meanings and implications of content.

The teacher stimulates and challenges students' thinking by exposing them to many information sources that include varying perspectives on topics and offer conflicting opinions on controversial issues. Students learn to listen carefully and respond thoughtfully, citing relevant evidence and arguments. They are challenged to come to grips with controversial issues, to participate assertively but respectfully in group discussions, and to work productively with peers in cooperative learning activities.

Active. Powerful social studies teaching and learning is rewarding, but it demands a great deal from both teachers and students. It requires thoughtful preparation and instruction by the teacher and sustained effort by the students to make sense of and apply what they are learning.

Rather than mechanically follow instructions in a manual, the teacher adjusts goals and content to students' needs, uses a variety of instructional materials, plans field trips or visits by resource people, develops current or local examples to relate content to students' lives, plans questions to stimulate reflective discussion, plans activities featuring authentic applications, scaffolds students' work in ways that provide them with needed help but also encourages them to assume increasing responsibility for managing their own learning, structures the classroom as a communal learning environment, uses accountability and grading systems that are compatible with these instructional goals and methods, and monitors reflectively and adjusts as necessary. The teacher also adjusts plans to developing circumstances, such as "teachable moments" that arise when students ask questions, make comments, or offer challenges worth pursuing.

Students develop new understandings through a process of active construction. They process content by relating it to what they already know (or think they know) about the topic, striving to make sense of what they are learning. They develop a network of connections that link the new content to preexisting knowledge and beliefs anchored in their prior experience. Sometimes the learning involves conceptual change because the students discover that some of their beliefs are inaccurate and need to be modified. The construction of meaning required to develop important social understandings takes time and is facilitated by interactive discourse. Clear explanations and modeling from the teacher are important, but so are opportunities to answer questions, discuss or debate

the meanings and implications of content, or use the content in activities that call for tackling problems or making decisions.

Teacher and student roles shift as learning progresses. Early in a unit, the teacher may need to provide considerable guidance by modeling, explaining, or supplying information that builds on students' existing knowledge. The teacher also may assume much of the responsibility for structuring and managing learning activities at this stage. As students develop expertise, however, they can begin to assume responsibility for regulating their own learning by asking questions and by working on increasingly complex applications with increasing degrees of autonomy.

The teaching emphasizes authentic activities that call for using content for accomplishing life applications. Critical-thinking dispositions and abilities are developed through policy debates or assignments calling for critique of currently or historically important policies, not through artificial exercises in identifying logical or rhetorical flaws. Students engage in cooperative learning, construct models or plans, recreate historical events that shaped democratic values or civic policies, role play and simulation activities (such as mock trials or simulated legislative activities), interview family members, and collect data on the Internet or in the local community. Such activities help them to develop social understandings that they can explain in their own words and can apply in appropriate situations.

Social studies teaching is powerful when it relates to children's lives beyond the schoolhouse walls, when it is taught in ways that integrate the disciplines it encompasses as well as other relevant subject areas, when it requires students to act and think in ways that require them to embrace the core democratic values, when it requires students to use analytic and higher-order thinking skills, and when it engages students in active rather than passive ways. Does it sound impossible to plan lessons that do all these things? While occasionally a teacher (an experienced one!) may create a social studies lesson that may achieve all of these qualities, generally no one lesson can or is expected to do so. Instead, each social studies lesson should reflect some of these qualities, and one's social studies teaching throughout the entire school year should encompass all five qualities, with different emphases for different lessons.

Technology Tips

Planning lessons that incorporate all five NCSS qualities can be difficult. Unfortunately, much social studies teaching does not reflect these five qualities. However, we believe it is critical for aspiring educators to see these qualities "in practice." Powerful and Authentic Social Studies (PASS) is a professional development program designed to improve teaching, improve student achievement, and promote a culture of improvement. One of the PASS materials is videos of K–12 teaching and learning that is reflective of these qualities. See www.socialstudies.org/pass for more information on the resources and workshops.

Review the guiding questions we introduced in Chapter 1 and compare them to NCSS's five qualities. How will your social studies teaching reflect these guiding questions and qualities of powerful social studies?

Powerful Ideas

So far we have used the term “powerful” quite often (we use “powerful ideas” and “big ideas interchangeably). This is a key descriptor for the kind of social studies education we hope you plan and teach. We believe it is critical that social studies lessons focus on powerful ideas rather than the trivial or insignificant. From your perspective, is it more important to understand the causes and outcomes of the Civil War or to be able to recite the names of all the battles fought in the war? Why? The importance of powerful ideas has been recognized at least since Dewey (1902, 1938), who emphasized using powerful ideas to connect subject matter to children’s prior knowledge in ways that made their learning experiences transformative. Transformative learning does not merely add to our fund of knowledge but enables us to see some aspect of the world in a new way, such that we find new meaning in it and value the experience (Girod & Wong, 2002). When students explore in depth the concept of biological adaptation, for example, they begin to notice aspects of the appearance and behavior of animals that they did not notice before, and to hypothesize about relationships between these observed traits and the ways that animals have adapted to their environments (Pugh, 2002).

Others who have addressed the classical curricular question of what is most worth teaching have reached similar conclusions. Whether they refer to powerful ideas, key ideas, generative ideas, or simply big ideas (Smith & Girod, 2003), they converge on the conclusion that certain aspects of school subjects have unusually rich potential for application to life outside of school—most notably, powerful ideas developed with focus on their connections and applications.

Powerful ideas have several distinctive characteristics. They are fundamental to the subject area in general and the major instructional goals in particular. In the context of elementary social studies, we consider ideas to be powerful (or big, key, generative, or transformative) to the extent that they help students develop connected understandings of how significant aspects of the social system work, how and why they got to be that way over time, how and why they vary across locations and cultures, and what all of this might mean for personal, social, and civic decision making. Powerful ideas are embedded within networks of knowledge and connected to other powerful ideas. Teaching about an object, tool, or action principle, for example, ordinarily would include attention to propositional knowledge (e.g., knowledge about what it is and why and how it was developed), procedural knowledge (how to use it), and conditional knowledge (when and why to use it).

Some aspects of a topic are inherently more generative or transformative than others. Powerful teaching about a state, for example, would call attention to its salient historical and geographic features, especially those that help explain its current population makeup and economic emphases. In contrast, there is little or no application potential in teaching about the state’s flag, song, bird, and so forth.

We developed our appreciation of the power of big ideas through our research on the activities included or suggested in the teachers’ editions of social studies textbook series. We found many good activities, but also many others that were mostly busywork: word searches, cutting and pasting, coloring, connecting dots, memorizing state capitals and state symbols. In analyzing what made the good activities good and the bad ones bad, we noted that the former consistently were focused around significant goals and big ideas, but the latter were not. Furthermore, we came to realize that a focus on goals and big ideas is important not only to help ensure that students perceive the content as interesting, relevant, and worth learning, but also to help ensure that the activities based on this content are authentic and engaging.

A goal-oriented curriculum designed to teach important ideas for understanding and application will provide a basis for authentic activities that call for students to think critically and creatively in the process of conducting inquiry, solving problems, or making decisions. In contrast, a parade-of-facts curriculum restricts one's options to reading, recitation, and seatwork activities—mostly low-level ones calling for retrieval of definitions or facts (matching, filling in blanks) or isolated practice of part-skills. You cannot improve parade-of-facts curricula simply by replacing their worksheets with better activities; you must first replace the knowledge component, or at least supplement it in ways that emphasize big ideas that can provide a content base capable of supporting better activities. (If you doubt this, try designing worthwhile activities based on information about the states' flags, songs, or birds.) Big ideas lend themselves to authentic applications, of which many will be generative and even transformative; trivial facts do not.

*Reflect on social studies teaching you have observed.
What were some facts, and what were powerful
ideas of the lessons? Which are more
memorable: facts or powerful ideas? Why?*

Planning Goal-Oriented Topical Units

The NCSS (2010) guidelines endorse the idea that social studies skills should be taught as an integral part of the program. This good advice is often violated or ignored. The content expectations of state and national standards are typically skill-based and easily measurable. With the current pressures of standardized testing, teachers often never get beyond the knowledge and skill goals.

For example, recently we observed two different approaches to writing persuasive essays. In the first case, the teacher told the students that they were going to learn how to write such essays because they needed to be able to do so for the upcoming state test. After minimal modeling or formal instruction and lots of moans and groans, students were given time to practice. Even though they were given choices about what to write, they approached the assignment as a perfunctory task. In the second class, the teacher had taught the basics of persuasion and essay writing in literacy. As part of their unit on Canada, students were asked to write essays persuading their families that a trip to Canada would be a great choice for their next vacation. Before they launched into the writing, they reviewed the basics of a persuasive essay and brainstormed all of the possible ideas that might convince their families. The essays would be sent home, and family members would be invited to come to class, comment on the essays, and react to their persuasive arguments. This context of authenticity promoted interest. In fact, students were highly engaged and complained that the class period was too short.

Instructional units featuring interdisciplinary treatment of topics provide the best basis for selecting and organizing content for elementary social studies since it is impossible to study history without drawing upon content from geography, economics, and civics. (Unit plans, which are described in Chapter 4, include a series of lessons that may span several days or weeks and are connected by common themes, goals, and big ideas). In comparison to disciplinary structures, topical units offer more flexibility concerning the nature and

sources of content. Guided by the social understanding and civic efficacy goals of social studies, the teacher can include any sources of content and skills that seem appropriate, drawing not only from the social studies foundational disciplines (history, geography, and the social sciences), but from the arts, sciences, and humanities, from current events, and from the students' familial and cultural backgrounds. Students can learn disciplinary content within the context of studying a topic or issue that is meaningful to their lives. Often skill sets introduced in other content areas are useful in promoting meaningfulness.

The unit approach also offers flexibility with respect to teaching methods and learning activities. There is no exclusive reliance on direct instruction, inquiry, or any other single approach. There will be variation, both across units and across subtopics within units, in the proportion of time spent introducing new information, developing comprehension of key ideas through discourse, or engaging students in inquiry or application activities. The kinds of activities emphasized will vary with the content and learning outcomes to be developed. Thus, students might generate a report or product relating to one subtopic but engage in debate about another. Where subtopics lend themselves to it, activities would include hands-on projects, site visits, collection of data in the home or neighborhood, or other experiential learning.

We do not mean to imply that all topical units are effective. Such units will not have much value if they are developed around topics that do not have much potential as vehicles for accomplishing important social studies goals. Also, even if the topic is well chosen, it may not be developed in goal-oriented ways. The subtopics selected for emphasis might be trite details rather than powerful ideas, or the treatment might amount to a parade of disconnected facts that leaves students without a network of usable knowledge. In fact, most of the problems with contemporary instructional materials can be traced to poor development of topics rather than to the choice of the topics themselves.

Goal-Oriented Development of Powerful Ideas

It ought to be easy to focus social studies instruction on important topics and develop these topics with an emphasis on powerful ideas. Teachers would only need to pose the following questions and then follow through accordingly:

1. What topics are most useful as bases for advancing my students' social understanding and civic efficacy?
2. What are the most important understandings about the topics that my students will need to develop, and how do these connect to one another and to related skills, values, and dispositions?

If major social education goals were used in this way to guide curriculum development and instructional planning, they would yield coherent social studies programs. However, major social understanding and civic efficacy goals tend to get lost as operational plans are developed for implementing state and district curriculum guidelines. Planning gets driven by content and skill coverage lists rather than major goals. Content standards, benchmarks, performance indicators, and even pacing guides are rarely written as goals and often appear very disjointed. As a result, the content of many lessons and even entire units becomes disconnected and trite, often lacking in life-application potential and thus having little social education value. For example, Naylor and Diem (1987, p. 51) cited the following hierarchy of curriculum goals as typical for social studies:

District-wide goal (taken from the NCSS guidelines): To prepare young people to become humane, rational, participating citizens in a world that is becoming increasingly interdependent.

Program-area goal for social studies, K–12: To enable students to recognize and appreciate that people living in different cultures are likely to share some common values but also to hold other different values that are rooted in experience and legitimate in terms of their own culture.

Grade-level goal for social studies, Grade 1: To understand and appreciate that the roles and values of family members may differ according to the structure of the family, its circumstances, and its cultural setting.

Unit-level goal for social studies, Grade 1: To understand that families differ in size and composition.

Notice that the last (unit-level) goal is phrased in purely descriptive, knowledge-level language, and that it is trite for a unit goal even at the first-grade level. It makes no reference to the anthropological and sociological concepts (cultures, roles) or to the values and dispositions (multicultural appreciation, citizen participation) referred to in the higher-level goals. Unless the teacher has a coherent view of the nature and purposes of social education and thus is aware of how this topic fits within the big picture, the result is likely to be a unit that is long on isolated practice of facts or skills but short on integration and application of social learning. Students will learn a few obvious generalities about families, such as that they differ in size and composition, that they grow and change, and that their members work and play together. However, they will not learn much about variations in family roles across time and culture, the reasons for these variations, or the lifestyle trade-offs that they offer. There will be little to advance the students' knowledge of the human condition, to help them put the familiar into broader perspective, or even to stimulate their thinking about family as a concept.

Several consequences follow from limiting the unit-level goal to developing the understanding that families differ in size and composition. The "composition" part at least has potential: If developed properly, it could lead to informative and thought-provoking lessons on family composition and roles as they have evolved through time and as they exist today in different societies. To have much social education value, however, such lessons would have to emphasize not merely that such differences exist, but why. For example, the students might learn that a major social effect of industrialization is a reduction of the extended family's role as a functional economic unit, and that this precipitates a shift to the nuclear family as the typical household unit. Instead of living and working together as a large extended family, small nuclear families live in separate households and spend much of their time with nonrelatives. Their members may pursue more varied occupational and lifestyle options than exist in non-industrialized societies, but they usually must do so without the continuing involvement and support of a large extended family. Teaching such conceptually based content about families (in age-appropriate language) will help students to place the familiar into broader perspective. In this case, it will help them to appreciate the tradeoffs involved in various economic systems and associated lifestyles and perhaps to function more effectively as family members within our society.

The "size" part of the unit-level goal statement appears to lack social education value. First graders are already well aware that families differ in size, so what is the point of making this a major goal of the unit? Even worse, what is the point of following up such instruction with exercises requiring students to classify families as either "big" or "small"? Textbook publishers have discovered that a focus on family size provides an entry point for inserting certain generic skills exercises into the social studies curriculum. Thus, students are asked to count the members in depicted families or to compare and

contrast big and small families. Other such exercises call for students to infer by indicating whether depicted families are “working” or “playing” or by inspecting drawings of families depicted before and after an addition has occurred and circling the family member who represents the addition.

Similarly, units on shelter usually convey the fact that people live in a great variety of homes, but say very little about the reasons why they live in these different kinds of homes and nothing at all about advances in construction materials and techniques, weatherproofing, insulation, or temperature control that have made possible the features of modern housing that most children in the United States take for granted. Units on government mention a few titles (president, governor, mayor), places (Washington, DC, state capitols), and symbols (flag, ballot box), but say little about the functions and services performed by various levels of government. Thus, students learn that the positions of mayor, governor, and president exist, but not what these people or their governments do. In later grades, students are exposed to reams of geographical and historical facts without enough concentration on major themes and generalizations, cause-and-effect relationships, linkage to local examples and current events, or other instructional framing that might help them appreciate the significance of the information and consider how it might apply to their lives outside of school.

To bring social studies curriculum and instruction into better alignment with the major goals of social understanding and civic efficacy, we need to honor these goals not just in theory but in practice. In particular, we need to use them as the functional bases for curriculum planning. An in-depth example of what this might mean is given below.

A Unit on Shelter

Social studies teaching in the primary grades usually emphasizes universal human characteristics, needs, and experiences (e.g., food, clothing, shelter, transportation, communication, occupations, social rules, government, and laws) addressed within the contexts of family, neighborhood, and community. We believe that an important social education goal for each of these topics is to build initial understandings that will enable students to grasp the basics of how that aspect of the social world functions, not only in the local community and in the contemporary United States generally but also in the past and in other cultures today. The idea is to expand the students’ limited purviews on the human condition and especially to help them put the familiar into historical, geographical, and cultural perspective. This will increase their understanding and appreciation of social phenomena that most of them have so far taken for granted without much awareness or appreciation.

Thus, rather than just teach that shelter is a basic human need and that different forms of shelter exist, the instruction would help students understand the reasons for these different forms of shelter. Students would learn that people’s shelter needs are determined in large part by local climate and geographical features and that most housing is constructed using materials adapted from natural resources that are plentiful in the local area. They would learn that certain forms of housing reflect cultural, economic, or geographic conditions (tipis and tents as easily movable shelters used by nomadic societies, stilt houses as adaptation to periodic flooding, high-rises as adaptation to land scarcity in urban areas). They would learn that inventions, discoveries, and improvements in construction knowledge and materials have enabled many modern people to live in housing that offers better durability, weatherproofing, insulation, and temperature

control, with fewer requirements for maintenance and labor (e.g., cutting wood for a fireplace or shoveling coal for a furnace) than anything that was available to even the richest of their ancestors.

They also would learn that modern industries and transportation make it possible to construct almost any kind of shelter almost anywhere on earth, so that it is now possible for those who can afford it to live comfortably in very hot or very cold climates. These and related ideas would be taught with appeal to the students' sense of imagination and wonder. There also would be emphasis on values and dispositions (e.g., consciousness-raising through age-suitable activities relating to the energy efficiency of homes or the plight of the homeless). Development and application activities might include such things as a tour of the neighborhood (in which different types of housing would be identified and discussed) or an assignment calling for students to take home an energy-efficiency inventory to fill out and discuss with their parents. Students would begin to see function and significance in elements of their physical and social environment that they were not aware of before, as well as to appreciate their current and future opportunities to make decisions about and exercise some control over aspects of their lives related to their shelter needs. The following unit on shelter illustrates our ideas about teaching and how we apply the principles of goal setting and content selection and representation.

The goals of this unit on shelter as a cultural universal are:

1. To build on students' already-attained understanding that shelter is a basic need by helping them to understand and appreciate key features of contemporary homes, how the forms and functions of homes evolved over time, through space and across cultures.
2. To help students appreciate the potential implications of this learning for decision making regarding personal housing needs and preferences.

Basic social knowledge is about people—what they do and why they do it. It is not about the disciplines or about shelter, except in this context. In teaching about aspects of human social life, we will include a historical dimension (how it evolved over time) and a cultural dimension (how it varies across cultures). In addressing shelter, the historical dimension will emphasize the role of technology and inventions. Early on people were at the mercy of their environments, but as technology developed they became more able to control or even shape these environments. Today, we have selected and controlled environments suited to our chosen lifestyles, not just “shelter.”

The cultural, and to some extent, the economic dimensions of shelter are connected to the distinctions between needs and wants. As architectural styles and technology developed, people could begin to exercise choice in meeting their shelter needs and wants. This led to a diversity of styles within and across cultures and to the development of features such as landscaping, decorating, and so on.

Content selection and development will also reflect other “meta” ideas: human progress over time, making the familiar strange by placing it in historical and cultural context, choices open to people and the tradeoffs embodied in these choices, human applications of knowledge and technology to achieve control over the environment (but with tradeoffs here too), and the social reality of homelessness.

The first lesson plan is provided in its entirety, and topics, general comments, goals, main ideas, and assessments are included for the others. For complete lesson plans, see Alleman and Brophy (2001).



Lesson 1: What Is Shelter and What Are Its Functions?

Resources

- Pictures, books, and electronic sources and computer in an interest center focusing on shelter
- Strips of paper with questions related to shelter posted throughout the classroom
- Bulletin board that has been started depicting the functions of shelter
- Photos (exterior and interior) of the teacher's home, illustrating its functions
- A Look at Our Home: Home Assignment Sheet

Children's Literature

Kalman, B. (1994). *Homes around the world*. New York: Crabtree.

Morris, A. (1992). *Houses and homes*. New York: Lothrop, Lee, & Shephard.

General Comments

To launch the unit, collect the instructional resources and display visual prompts to generate interest in the topic. Post questions (written on wide strips of paper) around the room and on the bulletin board. For example, What is shelter? Why do we need shelter? Why do people choose different kinds of homes? What types of homes do we have in our community? How do climate and physical features influence the types of homes we have? Why do people sometimes have portable shelters? What are some of the decisions people have to make when choosing a home? Why are there so many different kinds of shelters?

General Purposes or Goals

To help students become aware of the possible questions to be answered about shelter; understand why people need shelter (e.g., it provides protection against the elements, provides a place to keep one's possessions, and is a home base for daily life and professional work activities); and acquire an appreciation for the diversity that exists in the nature and functions of shelter.

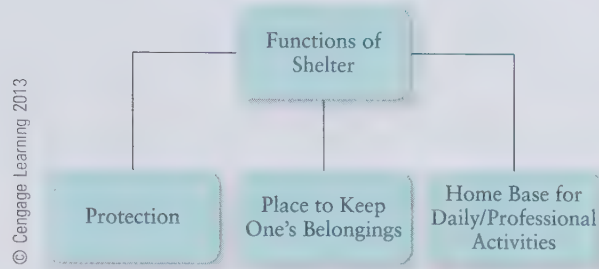
Main Ideas to Develop

- Shelter is a basic need.
- Throughout history, people have needed shelter for protection from the elements (e.g., sun in hot weather, cold in cold weather, precipitation, wind), as places to keep their possessions, and as places in which to carry out their daily and professional work activities.
- Other factors that people take into account in deciding the kind of home to build or buy include the availability of building materials, economic resources, cultural considerations, and personal preferences.

Introduction—Lesson

Pose questions regarding the meaning of shelter and its functions. Sample questions might include: What is shelter? Why do people need shelter? Why are there so many different kinds of shelters? How do climate and physical features influence the types of shelters people have? What types of shelters do we have in our community?

After a preliminary discussion of these questions and an explanation about answering these and other questions as the unit unfolds, show the class a bulletin board that you have begun that focuses on the functions of shelter.



Use your home as an example to illustrate the functions of shelter. Show photos of the exterior and interior of your home as you share “your story.”

Protection

People need places to live that provide protection from cold, heat, storms, insects, animals, etc. Even in warm climates, people need protection from the elements. There is a variety of shelter types that people can choose from. In our community there are houses, apartments, duplexes, and manufactured homes. [A manufactured home is a house built in two sections, each on its own foundation that sits on a trailer to be hauled to a person’s property. It is then put together. They can be quite luxurious with island kitchens, fireplaces, master bedroom suites, and so forth. These manufactured homes have replaced the simple trailer homes of the past.] Can you think of others? [Show a photo of your shelter and explain why you chose it. Describe the building materials that were used and why. If available, show samples.]

Places to Keep Belongings

The interior of the home is a place to store food, clothes, books, prized possessions, beds, and furniture. [Through photos, take an imaginary walking tour of your home, showing your various belongings and explaining why they need to be kept inside.]

Home Base

The interior of the home is also a place for carrying out your daily and professional work activities such as sleeping, eating, doing schoolwork, doing research on the Internet for a presentation, conducting a meeting through videoconferencing, watching television, and spending time with family. [Continue the imaginary walking tour of your home, pointing out its uses as a home base.]

[Optional: If time permits, organize a walking tour of the immediate neighborhood, pointing out the different kinds of homes—contrasting in many ways, yet all made of building materials suited to the physical features and climate. As you walk, underscore that each of these homes provides protection, a place for one’s belongings, and a home base for daily and professional work activities. If possible, arrange to tour a home in the neighborhood and illustrate its functions. Explain its similarities to your home.]

Share the book entitled *Homes Around the World* (Kalman, 1994) with the students. (It contains numerous illustrations depicting the functions of homes.) Explain that homes vary in size, shape, and type of building materials used, depending on physical features, climatic conditions, available resources, and people’s personal choices. However, they all serve the same basic functions.

Activity

At the conclusion of the story-like presentation regarding the functional uses of shelter, ask the students to share in pairs the most interesting ideas they learned. Then, elicit ideas from the pairs and write them on the board. Ask students to indicate other questions that they would like to have answered about the functions (or other aspects) of

shelter. Post the questions. Encourage students to peruse the books and electronic resources available in the shelter center in the classroom.

OR

Using a set of pictures and an activity sheet entitled “The Functions of Shelter,” have students place the listed functions into categories and explain their reasoning.

Summarize Key Points

- Shelter serves several functions that are universal across time, culture, and place.
- Shelters are made of a variety of building materials, depending on natural and human factors.
- There are many kinds of shelters such as apartments, duplexes, manufactured homes and houses, even in our community; however, they all provide protection, a place to store belongings, and a base for daily and professional work activities.

Assessment

Have the students brainstorm at their tables the things that they have learned about the functions of shelter. Then, as a class, complete a chart focusing on these functions. Encourage the students to give and explain examples. Then have students individually respond to the following open-ended statements. (With assistance from upper-grade mentors or posted word cards reflecting the big ideas, if necessary.)

People need shelters because _____.

My teacher’s home protects her from _____.

My teacher’s home provides a place for _____.

Day-to-day living activities at my teacher’s house include _____, _____, and _____.

[If time permits, have students draw pictures to illustrate their responses.]

Home Assignment

Encourage the students to share with their families what they learned about the functions of shelter in their neighborhood and around the world, and about their teacher’s home (using the open-ended statements as the springboard for the conversation). Also, encourage students to discuss with their families their shelter choices (i.e., why they live where they do) and the functions that their home fulfills for them.

Name _____



A Look at Our Home: Lesson 1

With a parent or older brother or sister, look around your home. List examples of how your home functions. For example, the roof, walls, windows, and doors keep out the rain. The roof provides shade from the sun. The door locks keep unwanted people from entering, etc. Attach pictures if available.

Parts of Our Home That Provide Protection	Parts of Our Home That Provide Places to Keep Belongings	Parts of Our Home That Provide a Base for Daily and Professional Work Activities



Lesson 2: Shelter Types in Our Community

General Purposes or Goals

To stimulate curiosity, build interest, and get students into the habit of actively observing the range of shelter types that exist locally; and develop knowledge, understanding, appreciation, and life application regarding shelter considerations and the factors that contribute to people's decisions about shelter.

Main Ideas to Develop

- There is a range of shelter types in our local community.
- Natural factors that contribute to the type of shelters that can be built in an area include climatic conditions, building materials found locally in large quantities, and physical features (terrain including hills, mountains, valleys, plains, and bodies of water such as lakes and rivers).
- Factors that contribute to family decisions about the type of shelter the family will select include location in the community, cost, cultural influences, and personal preferences.

Assessment

Tell the students to imagine that they are local real estate agents familiarizing a newcomer to the types of homes available. Give each individual student a stack of cards depicting shelter types and ask him/her to identify those that illustrate homes found in the local area. When students have completed the task, conduct a class discussion focusing on their responses and their reasoning. If time permits, have students select one card depicting a shelter type not found in the local area and explain in writing where it would most likely be found and why.



Lesson 3: Shelter Types Around the World

General Purposes or Goals

To stimulate curiosity as well as build appreciation for the diversity of shelter types in the world, understood as inventive adaptations to time and place; to recognize and explain the types of shelters that would and would not be appropriate in the local environment; and to explain how people adapt to their local environment when making choices associated with shelter.

Main Ideas to Develop

- Geographic features, culture, economic resources, and personal preferences are among the factors that figure into people's choices about the type of shelter they will have.
- People all over the world adapt to their environment, and as a result there are many types of shelters. Until recently, housing construction reflected the availability of local materials. This pattern still exists in some places, but in other places modern transportation has allowed choices to be expanded.

Assessment

[Make sure you model what you expect by completing your own form.]

Have students complete a series of open-ended statements. [Consider inviting upper-grade mentors to assist in the student writing.]

- The shelter type I would like to learn more about is _____ because _____.
- The things I already know about this shelter type are _____ and _____.

- The questions I have are _____ and _____.
- The things this shelter type has in common with my home are _____ and _____.



Lesson 4: Progress in Shelter Construction

General Purposes or Goals

To help students understand and appreciate the types of homes that have been created over time, the changes they have undergone, and the reasons for these changes; to engender a positive attitude about history; to stimulate students' curiosity regarding shelter types, styles, and building materials; and to engender a sense of wonder regarding the range of shelters as home bases for family activities.

Main Ideas to Develop

- Until recently, housing construction reflected the availability of local materials. This pattern still exists in some places, but in other places modern transportation has allowed choices to be expanded.
- New construction techniques and technological improvements get invented and refined over time. Now, besides meeting our needs for protection from the elements, modern homes cater to our wants for a comfortable living space, hot and cold running water, electric lighting, comfortable beds, and furniture.

Assessment

Give students individual blank timelines and ask them to show through drawings and words how shelter has progressed over time. If time permits, ask them to write a paragraph explaining which time period they would have most liked to live in because of the type of shelter they would have lived in and why.



Lesson 5: Progress in Shelter Construction (Continued from Lesson 4)

General Purposes or Goals

To develop an understanding and appreciation of progress in shelter construction; some understanding about the steps in building a house and a range of people who are involved in the project; and a "macro" understanding and appreciation for some of the features we currently label as modern conveniences, especially the control of light, heat, and water.

Main Ideas to Develop

- In the past, most housing construction was dependent on the availability of local materials. While this pattern still exists to some extent, modern transportation has allowed choices to be expanded.
- New construction techniques and technological improvements have been invented and refined over time. Now, besides meeting needs to protect people from the elements, modern houses cater to our wants by providing a comfortable range of temperatures, hot and cold running water, electrical lighting, and so forth.
- Today's homes are planned to take advantage of advances in new designs, technologies, and materials. Many workers are involved to ensure that the plans are realized.

Assessment

Using word cards naming the steps in building a house, have each student sequence them. Then have the student select the one step and job that s/he might like to do as an adult. Write a short paragraph explaining the choice. Illustrate if time permits.

1. Purchase the land
2. Blueprints
3. Building contractor
4. Dig a hole
5. Footings and connections for sewer and water
6. Pour cement
7. Block layers build outer walls
8. Carpenters build floors
9. Carpenters build inner structure
10. Carpenters build roof
11. Roofers shingle and carpenters add windows
12. Chimney is built
13. Plumbers put in pipes
14. Insulation
15. Electricians wire
16. Drywall installed
17. Carpenters add doors, cupboards
18. Painters paint
19. Light fixtures are added
20. Carpets laid

Lesson 6: Careers Associated with Shelter

General Purposes or Goals

To develop: knowledge, understanding, and appreciation regarding career opportunities that exist within the home industry; understanding and appreciation for how technology can change the way work is done and how people can change the way homes look; and a sense of efficacy among students—any one of them might invent a machine, a process, or a design that will benefit all of us in the future.

Main Ideas to Develop

- The home industry provides a range of opportunities for individuals to be creative and pursue careers.
- Today, it takes a variety of workers to perform specific steps in building a house or apartment.
- Many changes have occurred in the home building industry over the past 200 years.

Assessment

Have each student complete the open-ended statements. Illustrations are optional.

The one career I would like to have in the home building industry is _____.

I think I would like that job because _____

The one question I still have about it is _____



Lesson 7: Costs Associated with Your Shelter

General Purposes or Goals

To develop an understanding of and appreciation for the need to pay for a shelter/home and for modern conveniences such as purified water, energy/electricity, and fuel delivered to our homes, and an understanding of basic principles and choice options involved in buying or a renting shelter.

Main Ideas to Develop

- You can buy a house without having the full purchase price, although you can lose it if you do not continue to make your payments.
- Some people choose to live in an apartment temporarily while they save enough money for a down payment. Others choose apartments as permanent residences for other reasons such as convenience or fewer maintenance responsibilities.
- Banks (and sometimes private individuals) lend people the money to buy a house. The people have to pay back the amount of the loan plus interest. That is how banks make money.
- People have to pay to live in apartments. Some of the rent money goes to paying taxes and some of it is kept by the owner of the building. Renting is intended to be a profit-making business.
- Whether you live in a house or an apartment, you pay utility companies for heat (fuel), water and light (electricity).
- You pay money to the government (taxes) to maintain roads, provide police protection and fire protection and operate schools. (If you are buying your home, you pay taxes directly to the government. If you are renting, some of the money you pay to the apartment building owner goes to the government for these services.)
- A large part of the family income goes for buying or renting and maintaining the property.

Assessment

Have students write paragraphs focusing on costs associated with buying and renting. Why does buying a house take so much money? Write a short paragraph answering this question.

Why does renting an apartment take so much money? Write a short paragraph answering this question.

(Option: Students could draw and label their responses.)

Lesson 8: Choice Making

General Purposes or Goals

To (1) enhance students' understanding regarding the forms of shelter that are available; (2) develop an appreciation for the opportunities that people may have to exercise choice in meeting their shelter needs/wants; (3) enhance students' understanding and appreciation regarding major choices that need to be made early in the decision-making process—namely location and whether to rent or buy.

Main Ideas to Develop

- One of the choices people have to make is location—where they will live.
- Other choices concern such issues as the size of the place, cost, length of expected stay and special features.
- Another choice is whether to rent or buy.

Assessment

Have each student complete the questioning exercise focusing on choice making. [Optional: Invite upper-grade members or adult volunteers to serve as recorders.]

If, in the future, our family needs to move, we should ask several questions before we make a final decision about where we will live. Questions we need to ask—and be able to answer—include:

1. Why are we moving?
2. Do we have a house to sell? (If we do, we probably cannot buy another until we sell the one we own now.)
3. Do we need to be near our parents' work?
4. Does our family have its own means of transportation?
5. Do we need to be near the schools? Interstate? Airport? Other? Why?
6. How long does our family expect to stay in this place?
7. How much does our family want to spend?
8. What are special features of the new shelter that we need? Want?

[Optional: If time permits, have students role play their plan for questions associated with family choice making.]

Lesson 9: Portable Shelters

General Purposes or Goals

To develop an understanding and appreciation that portable shelters are intended and designed for portability and that some people depend solely on portable shelters because they are nomadic, while others use them for short periods of time to satisfy their short term needs (e.g., hunting, recreation).

Main Ideas to Develop

- Portable shelters are built out of a variety of materials, take many forms, and are used for a variety of reasons.
- Especially in the past, portable shelters have been used by nomadic societies.
- Today portable shelters range from being primarily recreational in our area to being a necessity in a few places.

Assessment

Have each student complete an individual journal entry.

I learned that portable shelters _____

The most interesting portable shelter type to me is _____
because _____

Questions I have about the most interesting portable shelter include:

Our family would like to use a portable shelter on our next vacation.

_____ Yes _____ No

Reasons For	Reasons Against
1. _____	1. _____
2. _____	2. _____
3. _____	3. _____
4. _____	4. _____

Lesson 10: Design Your Ideal Future Home

General Purposes or Goals

To draw on acquired knowledge and appreciation regarding shelter in order to “design” an ideal home and to develop an appreciation regarding the range of considerations that need to be addressed when deciding on the ideal home. (Students are to project ahead as adults and be realistic. They should not plan for things that cost millions of dollars unless they also have a plan for making large amounts of money.)

This lesson will probably be most successful if older students could work as mentors in one-on-one situations.

Main Ideas to Develop

- Location, climatic conditions, availability of materials, cost, family size and composition are among the factors to consider when attempting to identify and “design” the ideal home.
- Individual tastes and preferences enter into the decision-making process.

Assessment

After completing the home assignment, as a family create a journal entry entitled “A Day in Our Ideal Home.” Imagine that a guest was coming to your house to look at it—what would s/he see as s/he walked up the sidewalk, drove into the driveway, looked out the back door? Or imagine that a guest was coming to your house to look at it—describe four things you would want your guest to see.

Another option might be to have the students “talk into a tape recorder” explaining their ideal homes.

Lesson 11: Homelessness**General Purposes or Goals**

To help students understand that in extreme cases people are unable to pay for shelter and may become homeless and to acquire a sensitivity for homeless people and a desire to practice citizenship as it relates to assisting others in need.

We recommend that you use children’s literature to facilitate discussion about homelessness. Suggested sources include *Someplace to Go* (Testa, 1996) and *Uncle Willie and the Soup Kitchen* (DiSalvo-Ryan, 1991).

Main Ideas to Develop

- Sometimes people cannot pay for shelter and utilities due to unemployment or underemployment, and some become homeless. Often these circumstances are due to illness, fire, flooding, loss of jobs, or accumulation of bills.
- People who are homeless can secure help from community organizations (e.g., the United Way, Rescue Mission, Salvation Army, or religious organizations).
- As members of the community, we can contribute to organizations that assist people in need by donating time, food, money, and clothing.

Assessment

Have students respond to three open-ended statements:

1. Reasons people might become homeless might include _____, _____, and _____.

2. Our community helps homeless people by _____

_____.

3. I can help homeless people by _____

_____.



Lesson 12: Review

General Purposes or Goals

To draw on prior knowledge, understanding, appreciation, and applications conducted in school and at home that collectively will enhance meaningfulness and continued curiosity in learning about shelter, and to revisit and reflect on the big ideas developed about shelter.

Main Ideas Developed Throughout the Unit

Review the main ideas from Lessons 1-11.

Individual Assessment Activity: If True, Illustrate!

Read each of the statements to the class. (Each student will have his/her own copy.) Place a T by each statement that is correct. After you have marked all of the T statements, draw pictures to explain why you believe they are correct. [Model the directions by doing one as a class.]

- T 1. Not all types of portable shelter exist in our community. (Draw one that does not.)
- T 2. In the early days, housing construction reflected the availability of local materials.
- F 3. Only some people need shelter.
- F 4. All of the shelters in our community look the same.
- T 5. Climate and culture influence the types of shelters people have.
- F 6. People who own houses do not have to pay for water, heat, or electricity.
- T 7. There are many kinds of portable shelters.
- T 8. A large part of the family income goes for paying for shelter and maintaining it.

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Summary

Powerful social studies teaching is planned to accomplish major goals phrased as intended outcomes—the knowledge, skills, attitudes, values, and dispositions to action that we wish to develop in students. These goals should determine what content is selected for inclusion in the curriculum, how this content is represented to students, the kinds of discourse used to develop the big ideas, the activities and assignments used to develop and apply what is learned, and the methods used to assess progress. The teaching of all school subjects should reflect generic goals of teaching for understanding, appreciation, and life application. Within that, social studies instruction should be planned to accomplish the major social studies goals of social understanding and civic efficacy. Social studies teaching that is oriented toward those goals is powerful when it is meaningful, integrative, value-based, challenging, and active, as described in the NCSS (2008) Position Statement.

We strongly recommend that instructional planning focus first on the unit level, rather than the more specific lesson or activity level, to ensure that the planning in general remains goal-oriented and that you as the teacher (and through you, your students) maintain awareness of how individual lessons and activities fit within the big picture. We also recommend that the content and skill components of the unit be integrated. This helps ensure that the knowledge content is applied and that the skill content is used for authentic purposes.

Planning of topical units focused around major social studies goals helps to ensure that the instruction is complete, balanced, and well suited to the needs and interests of elementary students. Content is pan-disciplinary rather than confined to a single discipline, and students develop a variety of skills as they process and apply the content, and multiple connections are

made to their lives outside of school. Once you have clarified your major social studies goals for the year as a whole and for the unit you are planning, the next step is to determine which content relating to the unit's topic to develop and how to represent it to your students. The content should be clustered around powerful ideas that students can apply to their lives outside of school, and developed in ways that connect to the students' prior knowledge and home experiences. Development of these big ideas should include their connections to one another and to related skills, values, and dispositions. These connections should not get lost in the process of moving from broader goals to more specific plans for units and lessons.

To illustrate what is involved in developing unit plans around goals and big ideas, we drew from our own 12-lesson unit on shelter (Alleman & Brophy, 2001), showing some of the introductory material that summarizes ideas relating to shelter that we view as powerful, the first lesson in its entirety, and the goals, main ideas, and assessment activities for the rest of the lessons. The unit is designed to deepen students' awareness and appreciation of activities relating to shelter in the contemporary United States, help them to view these within a broad historical and multicultural context, and help them become anticipatory and efficacious concerning their own future decision making related to meeting their shelter needs.

Reflective Questions

1. Selecting and representing meaningful content for social studies units requires thoughtful, goal-oriented planning. Assuming that you accept the importance of this work, at least in principle, how will you proceed?
2. Many school districts require grill-and-drill sessions in preparation for high-stakes testing at the expense of teaching substantive content in powerful ways. Suppose your conscience gets the best of you and you decide to challenge this practice. What will you do?
3. What arguments can you make for depth over breadth for both students and teachers? What do you view as the trade-offs? Challenges?
4. Teachers often feel disempowered and very discouraged by the push for breadth, regurgitation, and mandated test preparation. How can you retain a positive attitude, maintain your integrity, and yet at some level accommodate the "system?" Or is that possible?
5. Why do you think goal-oriented planning is so challenging? What are the challenges and what are some strategies for overcoming them?
6. One of the ways teachers garner support for their ideas is by acquiring outside funding from mini-grants. What would you include in a proposal asking for funds to help you in designing a goal-oriented social studies unit (designate topic) that will focus on understanding, appreciate, and life application?
7. Suppose you decide to revamp your social studies program by shoring up your goals. Where would you start? How would you proceed?
8. Imagine that your cooperating teacher or principal observes your social studies class during the upcoming unit. You want this person to see evidence of your teaching for understanding. What will this look like? Sound like? What about your teaching for appreciation? And your teaching for life application?

Your Turn: Selecting and Representing Content

Identify the units you have taught—or plan to teach—this year. Examine them first by responding to the following questions:

1. What topics are most useful as bases for advancing my students' social understandings and civic efficacy?

2. What are the most important understandings that my students will need to develop, and how do these connect to one another and to related skills, values, and dispositions?

Key Topics	Major Understandings
1. _____	_____
2. _____	_____
3. _____	_____
4. _____	_____

Select a unit you have taught or plan to teach. Examine it carefully to determine whether it is reflective of the principles identified in this chapter for selecting and developing content. Where it is not, revise your plans accordingly. Share the results with a colleague. As you teach the unit—with the enhancements—be mindful of the changes. In your reflective log, document the results.

Principles	Examples of Application
<p><u>Principle 1</u></p> <p>Use contemporary and familiar examples to help students understand how and why the social system functions as it does with respect to the cultural universal under study.</p>	
<p><u>Principle 2</u></p> <p>Include a historical dimension illustrating how human responses to the cultural universal have evolved through time due to inventions and other cultural advances.</p>	
<p><u>Principle 3</u></p> <p>Include a geographical/cultural dimension that exposes students to current variations in human responses to the cultural universal.</p>	
<p><u>Principle 4</u></p> <p>Develop each topic with emphasis on its applications to students' current and future lives.</p>	



National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS). (2010). *National curriculum standards for social studies teachers: A framework for teaching, learning and assessment*. Silver Springs, MD: National Council for the Social Studies.

OR

In Chapters 5, 6, and 7 we provide principles for selecting content related to history, geography, anthropology (culture), psychology, sociology, economics, and political science that are traditionally taught at this level. We suggest you surf these chapters as well as revisit the curriculum strands published by NCSS. Use Figure 3.1 as a checklist to ensure that you address all the strands over the course of your school year.

If one or more of these curricular strands have not been developed sufficiently, add appropriate content. (An option is to substitute your state's social studies standards.) Share your work with a colleague or with your school principal. This exercise also could serve as a valuable activity for members of the social studies curriculum committee.

FIGURE 3.1 Social Studies Themes

	Unit One	Unit Two	Unit Three	Unit Four
Culture				
Time, Continuity, and Change				
People, Places, and Environments				
Individual Development and Identity				
Interactions Among Individuals, Groups, and Institutions				
Power, Authority, and Governance				
Production, Distribution, and Consumption				
Science, Technology, and Society				
Global Connections				
Civic Ideals and Practices				

WHAT SOCIAL STUDIES PLANNING TOOLS ARE AVAILABLE?

Clare Adamus, First-Year Teacher

TEACHER VOICE

During my internship, as I sat down with the district curriculum materials to plan my first social studies unit on slavery and the Underground Railroad, I was filled with hope that somehow the textbook would magically instruct me how to transform the social studies I had experienced in school into memorable and exciting lessons. Unfortunately, the textbook I was using left me uninspired: how could anyone—let alone a room full of second language learners—learn about nearly two centuries of slavery by reading a meager five pages? I hoped that the teacher's manual would help nudge me in a more positive direction but I found only word searches and other low level assessments that used vocabulary inaccessible to my students. If I were bored looking at the material, how would restless nine-year-olds feel?

Due to the support (and prodding) of my professors and mentor, I began planning weeks before I would be teaching my unit. The librarian at my local library became my best friend and I spent hours watching online videos, reading children's books, and surfing websites that matched my topic. I recommend following the authors' advice, for just as I did, you will get bombarded with the horrible, the mediocre, the acceptable, and the excellent materials out there, so keep your goals and objectives in mind (I wrote mine on neon sticky notes and posted them right under my nose!).

Finally, I had created a unit that I was pretty confident about and one that I was actually excited to teach. Before teaching it, I wanted to make sure I had covered all the bases, so I did a T-W-L (What I think I know, What I want to learn, and What I learned) chart activity with



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the students and found out that they already had some background knowledge and were amazing questioners. Questions like, “Were there ever any slaves that were white? Or are they always black?” and “Why did white people not like the black people?” expanded my focus for the unit. By the end of my 10-lesson unit, the students had analyzed the economics of slavery and the unfortunately, long and painful history of slavery in our world. They had learned valuable research skills. They discovered the motivation that led slaves to embark on dangerous escapes through narratives, legends, songs, videos, and actual recordings of slave testimonies and most powerfully, experienced an online, interactive slave journey from slavery to freedom in the North. I have never seen students so engaged and emotional about a school topic—some were nearly beside themselves with anxiety and eagerness for freedom! When we came to a crucial decision about hiding out or running for our lives while slave dogs sniffed around our hiding place in the woods, I became a mere facilitator of a heated debate that encompassed all that we had learned in the unit.

While I am still by no means a social studies planning master, I am excited for the next unit I design. I have changed the way I see the subject; the textbook is simply a guide that will give me the topics I should be covering and keep me on the same page as the district, but it ends there. Then, it is up to the teacher to find exciting, powerful, and meaningful supplements to form the meat of the unit. While it is more work, it is worth it the minute you overhear a student stating to her peers during a group activity, “Can you believe what the *esclavos* had to live through? I could never survive if they sold *mis padres* and I had to be by myself in the woods trying to find the North. I am afraid of being alone *en mi casa*! Slavery can never be allowed again, even if rich people do need work done for them.”

The aims that we profess for social studies often are invisible within our practices. “Aims talk is not a luxury in which only outside ‘experts’ and ivory-tower academics—who have time on their hands—engage, but it is essential for thoughtful classroom teaching” (Thornton, 2005, p. 47). Our textbook in general and this chapter in particular are intended to stimulate conversations with colleagues and be used as you chart your course for social studies instruction. Our goal is that you will develop a vision for what social studies can be in your classroom, enact it accordingly, and do so in ways that make your aims and goals transparent to your students.

Planning as Goal-Oriented

Throughout our book, we emphasize that powerful teaching begins with clarifying goals and developing powerful ideas. Planning with these as a priority is an essential component in social studies teaching. You are responsible for selecting and designing social studies-based learning experiences that reflect your school’s curriculum and community learning goals. You also need to be able to respond to your students’ needs and interests as well as be ready to make the most of unanticipated learning opportunities that surface during instructional interactions. To do all this, you need to be prepared.

Planning and preparation have been the objects of educational theory and research since the early 1950s, but dominant conceptions of teaching have shifted over the years. Today, with the increased pressures of standards and testing, there is heavy debate about whether planning is part of teachers' professional practice or has been coopted by district or school administrators. We strongly support the professional approach. After you read this text and reflect on the key teaching/learning principles that we offer, we hope you too will adopt it as your standard of practice.



Curricular Alignment

Principle 3: Curricular Alignment: All components of the curriculum are aligned to create a cohesive program for accomplishing instructional purposes and goals.

Students are more likely to meet the goals of lessons and units they are taught if the goals are aligned with assessments and instructional activities. Moreover, students are more likely to appreciate and have life application of lessons that are aligned with students' lives beyond school. In other words, students will be more motivated and will be more likely to retain knowledge, skills, and values that have meaning and relevancy to their daily lives. Please see Chapter 14 for a more in-depth description of the principle.

"Backward" Planning and Alignment

How do teachers plan so that their students can develop a deep understanding of powerful ideas? In what order do teachers plan goals, objectives, assessments, and instructional activities? In their widely used book *Understanding by Design*, Wiggins and McTighe (2005) present a framework for curriculum planning. They label the framework "backward" because it requires the teacher first to determine the goals students should achieve and then work toward developing assessments and finally the activities that will help students master the goals.

The *first stage involves determining the desired results students will achieve* as a result of the lesson or unit. These results include the overarching goals students will achieve; "enduring understandings" (similar to what we call powerful ideas); and the particular learning objectives. The *second stage is assessment* which involves determining what tasks students will perform to demonstrate achievement (understanding, appreciation, and application) of the desired results. The *third stage is the learning plan*, which involves selecting content, activities, and strategies that are aligned with the assessment and results (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005, pp. 13–34).

You may wonder why this approach is called "backward." You no doubt already understand the importance of goal setting before thinking about what resources you will use in a lesson or what activities you will have students do. In addition to being termed backward because the framework begins with the end outcome and moves backward to determine what will it take to help children reach those outcomes, it is also called backward because it contradicts how many teachers plan. Many teachers begin with an interesting topic or resource, and then they begin focusing on the actual tasks or activities their students will do. We do not mean to state that this is always an ineffective way to plan; often a particular book or public issue in the community is a terrific source of

inspiration for a lesson. We also acknowledge that planning is never an entirely linear process; often teachers revise their goals as the lesson develops. However, before getting too deep into the planning of the particular activities, it is critical to ensure you have set goals and have determined the ways in which students will show understanding of the objectives. As Wiggins and McTighe (2005, p. 15) explain, “too many teachers focus on the teaching and not the learning.” We see good planning as a continual revision of results, assessment, and activities until they are aligned. This might seem like a lot of effort in the short run, but in the long run it will benefit your students and save you time. See www.ubdexchange.org for more information.

We have used the term “alignment” and stressed its importance. What does it mean in relation to curriculum planning? Some definitions of alignment include the process of adjusting parts or sections so they are in proper relative position; it also means fitting together. These definitions represent what good curriculum does—it adjusts the various components (e.g., results, assessment, and instruction) to fit together. Have you ever had the unfortunate experience of not doing well on a test because the test had content different than what you were taught and what you studied? In those instances, the assessment was not a good measure of student learning because it was not aligned with what was taught. It is critical for all three components: results (goals, objectives), assessment, and instruction to have the same focus.

While instructional alignment probably seems like common sense to you, it is easier said than done, especially if much of your instruction tends to be student-driven. Students often take teachers’ lessons in fascinating and important new directions, but in different than the ones teachers were planning. While often it makes sense to capitalize on this student-driven interest for a period of time, it is important to remember that sticking to one’s goals during instruction will help students meet the results you have established.

Long-Range Planning

This section focuses on one of the most difficult but most rewarding types of planning: the long-range version. It takes desire, tenacity, resourcefulness, and lots of time at first. It typically gets easier as you become more familiar with the nature of students at a particular age level, the specific content, and available tools such as standards and assessment expectations. Some of the advantages of long-range planning include your ability to use student test data in diagnostic ways; use the skills and formats from standardized tests in natural ways as the yearlong plan unfolds; look for natural ways to integrate across subjects; look for optimal places across the year to introduce new content and skills, places to practice them, and places to apply them to new situations; and determine the most appropriate places for large-group, small-group, and individual instruction, realizing that all students are assessed on standardized tests individually. While preparing students for life is your ultimate goal, you want them to be comfortable and confident in testing situations as well as feel efficacious as they work on their own in and out of the classroom.

During long-range planning, you will need to revisit the social studies aim adopted by the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS). It states that “the primary purpose of social studies is to help young people develop the ability to make informed and reasoned decisions for the public good as citizens of a culturally diverse, democratic society in an interdependent world” (NCSS, 2010, p. 3). As you think deeply about the year and familiarize yourself with the content designated for your grade level, we suggest you *make a list of yearlong social studies goals that support the overall social studies aim*. Also, create a “portrait” that describes what your ideal social studies learner will look like at the end of the year.

Your yearlong goals and portrait of student progress are likely to feature relatively generic knowledge and skill developments, and especially growth in attitudes, beliefs, values, and dispositions to action that transcend the content taught in individual lessons and even units. You need to plan to give these yearlong goals consistent attention if you expect your students to make consistent progress as the school year unfolds.

Revisit your list of goals often. They have the potential to serve as powerful self-monitoring tools as you plan, implement, and assess instruction. Finally, consider engaging your students in these exercises. Talking about your goals and ideals and setting high expectations go a long way in realizing them.

Unit Planning

Unit plans are the major subsets of the yearlong plan. From each unit plan you will develop lesson plans that are at the most refined level of specificity. Research indicates that educational policymakers, textbook publishers, and teachers often become so focused on the content coverage or learning activities that they lose sight of the larger purposes and goals that are supposed to guide curriculum planning. This level of planning is typically ignored in elementary social studies textbook series, which provides one more reason why unit planning is necessary—and requires resources beyond the textbook.

Goals aligned with big ideas drawn from selected content are needed to guide each step in curriculum planning and implementation. Goals are most likely to be attained if all the curriculum components (content clusters, instructional methods, learning activities, and assessment tools—all topics of chapters in this text) are aligned and designed as means of helping students accomplish them. This involves planning curriculum and instruction to develop capabilities that students can use in their lives inside and outside school, both now and in the future. In this regard, it is important to emphasize goals of understanding, appreciation, and life application.

Ideally, each unit builds on the preceding ones so that there is a continuous revisiting and applying of big ideas. The net result is depth of understanding and memorable learning. Research indicates that networks of connected knowledge structured around powerful ideas can be acquired with understanding and retained in forms that make them accessible for application. In contrast, disconnected bits of information are likely to be learned only through low-level processes such as rote memorizing, and most of these bits either are soon forgotten or retained in ways that limit their accessibility (Bransford, Brown, & Cocking, 1999).

Weekly and Daily Planning

Goals and big ideas should guide weekly and daily social studies planning. Unfortunately, due to the complexity of the classroom and the multiple challenges you face in your role as a decision maker (Doyle, 1986), they are often ignored as attention focuses on the planning of activities. This is how social studies becomes piecemeal, combining a flurry of disconnected bits of information with a worksheet, a fun hands-on activity, or a discussion of a fanciful piece of children's literature that only topically matches the original goal.

Generally speaking, all of the unit components such as goals, big ideas, instructional strategies, activities, and so forth should remain in place as you prepare your weekly and daily lessons. Often, there are learning sequences that develop over several days, so your plans should reflect that. Coherent content linking prior knowledge to new material

should be a daily priority along with scaffolding students' task engagement. Research on learning tasks suggests that activities and assignments should be sufficiently varied and interesting enough to motivate student engagement, sufficiently new and challenging enough to constitute learning experiences rather than needless repetition, and yet easy enough to allow students to achieve high rates of success if they invest reasonable time and effort.

You also need to plan appropriate opportunities for modeling and instructing students in learning and self-regulation strategies. This requires comprehension instruction that includes attention to propositional knowledge (what to do), procedural knowledge (how to do it), and conditional knowledge (when and why to do it). Strategy teaching is especially important for less able students who otherwise might not come to understand the value of consciously monitoring, self-regulating, and reflecting on their learning processes.

Introduction to Planning Tools

The host of tools that are available for you to use in your planning—especially those mandated by your district such as content standards, pacing guides, and textbooks—often leave the impression that you simply “do” social studies. Teachers who are new to the field, not particularly passionate about social studies, or obsessed with facts, might secretly feel a sense of relief: “At last, they have told me what to do.” We, on the other hand, view all of the tools available to you, including the social studies standards, simply as resources to guide your planning.

Good unit planning begins with a specification of major goals and associated big ideas, then proceeds through the planning of content selection and representation, development of big ideas through discourse, application through authentic activities, and other elaborations addressed in subsequent chapters of this book. As a way to help you see the big picture of unit planning and how each of its components fits into it, we have provided a planning tool. The planning tool is presented in Appendix A.

NCSS Standards

The NCSS (2010) published curriculum standards that address overall curriculum design and comprehensive student performance expectations. Associations devoted to disciplines such as economics, political science (civics and government), history, and geography also have published standards that feature the priorities of their respective disciplines (see Chapters 5–7).

We encourage you and your colleagues to first establish your program framework using the social studies standards as a guide and then supplement it with standards from the single disciplines where relevant. The NCSS (2010) publication, *National Curriculum Standards for Social Studies Teachers: A Framework for Teaching, Learning, and Assessment*, has been designed to serve three purposes:

1. It serves as a framework for social studies program design from kindergarten through Grade 12.
2. It functions as a guide for curriculum decisions by providing student performance expectations in the areas of knowledge, processes and attitudes.
3. It provides examples of classroom activities that will guide teachers as they design instruction to help students meet performance expectations.



The NCSS standards consist of 10 themes incorporating fields of study that roughly correspond to the major social studies disciplines and process skills. The 10 themes are provided in Figure 4.1. See also www.socialstudies.org.

State Social Studies Standards

Most states have developed their own social studies standards or content expectations. If you teach in one of these states, you will be expected to incorporate its standards or content expectations into your planning. Typically the state standards or strands are a more specific version of the national guidelines and usually are tied to the state's testing program. For example, Standard III (People, Places, and Environments) is the most obvious geographic standard in the NCSS document. Other standards, including I, VII, and IX, incorporate geographic components. Geography education incorporates the five

FIGURE 4.1 Ten Thematic Themes for Social Studies Curriculum

Ten themes serve as organizing strands for the social studies curriculum at every school level (early grades, middle grades, and high school); they are interrelated and draw from all of the social science disciplines and other related disciplines and fields of scholarly study to build a framework for social studies curriculum.

I. Culture

Human beings create, learn, and adapt culture. Human cultures are dynamic systems of beliefs, values, and traditions that exhibit both commonalities and differences. Understanding culture helps us understand ourselves and others.

II. Time, Continuity, and Change

Human beings seek to understand their historic roots and to locate themselves in time. Such understanding involves knowing what things were like in the past and how things change and develop—allowing us to develop historic perspective and answer important questions about our current condition.

III. People, Places, and Environment

Technical advancements have ensured that students are aware of the world beyond their personal locations. As students study content related to this theme, they create their spatial views and geographical perspectives of the world; social, cultural, economic, and civic demands mean that students will need such knowledge, skills, and understandings to make informed and critical decisions about the relationship between human beings and their environment.

IV. Individual Development and Identity

Personal identity is shaped by one's culture, by groups, and by institutional influences. Examination of various forms of human behavior enhances understandings of the relationship between social norms and emerging personal identities, the social processes that influence identity formation, and the ethical principles underlying individual action.

V. Individuals, Groups, and Institutions

Institutions exert enormous influence over us. Institutions are organizational embodiments to further the core social values of

those who comprise them. It is important for students to know how institutions are formed, what controls and influences them, how they control and influence individuals and culture, and how institutions can be maintained or changed.

VI. Power, Authority, and Governance

Understanding of the historic development of structures of power, authority, and governance and their evolving functions in contemporary society is essential for emergence of civic competence.

VII. Production, Distribution, and Consumption

Decisions about exchange, trade, and economic policy and well-being are global in scope, and the role of government in policymaking varies over time and from place to place. The systematic study of an interdependent world economy and the role of technology in economic decision making is essential.

VIII. Science, Technology, and Society

Technology is as old as the first crude tool invented by prehistoric humans, and modern life as we know it would be impossible without technology and the science that supports it. Today's technology forms the basis for some of our most difficult social choices.

IX. Global Connections

The realities of global interdependence require understanding of the increasingly important and diverse global connections among world societies before there can be analysis leading to the development of possible solutions to persisting and emerging global issues.

X. Civic Ideals and Practices

All people have a stake in examining civic ideals and practices across time, in diverse societies, as well as in determining how to close the gap between present practices and the ideals upon which our democracy is based. An understanding of civic ideals and practices of citizenship is critical to full participation in society.

fundamental themes of geography associated with it: diversity of people, places, and cultures; human/environment interaction; location, movement, and connections; regions, patterns, and processes; and global issues and events. If your state has standards or content expectations, they may align with national standards.

Local Curriculum Guides

If you and your colleagues are being asked to revise your existing social studies curriculum to meet a designated set of standards or create local ones, we encourage you to begin with what you have and use it as a framework for decision making. You might address the following questions as you engage in this process:

- *How many of the standards clearly connect to my current curricular plan?*
- *Are there elements in my current social studies program that need to be expanded in order to align with the standards?*
- *How can the standards enhance my current social studies curriculum?*
- *How can I use the standards to guide my planning for depth of understanding and, if necessary, reduce the breadth of topic coverage?*
- *How can I use the standards accompanied by the performance expectations to guide my selection of instructional activities?*
- *How can I use the standards to align my assessment practices?*
- *How can I use the standards to guide my resource selections?* (Brophy & Alleman, 1995)

Typically, the documents generated for social studies at the local level are designed by teachers serving on a curriculum committee whose primary task is to take national and state guidelines, localize them, and make them “user friendly” for teachers. These guidelines usually are helpful in determining what should be taught at a given grade level, but if taken literally, they may result in a litany of disjointed facts that in the grand scheme of things are meaningless.

Textbooks

Despite the criticisms leveled against social studies textbooks, they remain a favored resource. One reason is teachers’ lack of time and resources to create their own units. Another is textbook companies’ claims that their materials align with national and state social studies standards and testing programs. Finally, many educators still believe that by covering the specific topics in the text, often through an over-reliance on a read/discuss model, their work is done. In contrast, we emphasize the *Five Qualities of Powerful Teaching*, adopted in the NCSS Position Statement (2008) and described in Chapter 3. Throughout this text these elements are blended with content in an attempt to create meaningfulness.

New teachers often have high expectations for textbook series because they are packaged attractively and presented to suggest that they are carefully developed and revised to meet the needs of students at each grade level. Even experienced teachers may suppress their misgivings about these textbook series because they think, “These texts are written by experts who know what they are doing, so who are we to question their work?” In fact, textbooks are written by people who work for the publishers (mostly English majors), in response to multiple and conflicting pressures. Consequently, we urge you to view each textbook as a tool, not as “the curriculum.” We have provided a checklist for you to use as you determine its function (see Figure 4.2) and to help you leverage your plea for additional resources.

FIGURE 4.2 Textbook
Assessment**CIRCLE YOUR RESPONSES****Goal-Oriented Approach**

- Yes _____ No _____ Are the goals clearly spelled out?
- Yes _____ No _____ Do they represent understanding, appreciation, and life application?
- Yes _____ No _____ Do they focus on the big ideas?

Content Selection

- Yes _____ No _____ Is the content adequate?
- Yes _____ No _____ Where appropriate, are multiple perspectives provided to alleviate bias?
- Yes _____ No _____ Does the content connect to important social education goals?

Coverage

- Yes _____ No _____ Does the sequence of ideas or events make sense?
- Yes _____ No _____ Are relationships between the big ideas apparent?
- Yes _____ No _____ Are prior knowledge and/or experience issues recognized?

Skills

- Yes _____ No _____ Is what is promised as front matter in the teacher's guide delivered in the student text?
- Yes _____ No _____ Are the skills linked to the knowledge content?
- Yes _____ No _____ Is a range of skills included (i.e., map and globe skills, information gathering, report writing, critical thinking, decision making, value analysis?)

Teacher-Student Relationships and Classroom Discourse

- Yes _____ No _____ Are there planned discussions of key ideas?
- Yes _____ No _____ Would the plans yield sustained, critical and reflective dialogue?
- Yes _____ No _____ Are there opportunities for student-student discourse?

Activities and Assignments

- Yes _____ No _____ Are the activities and assignments goal oriented?
- Yes _____ No _____ Are they at the appropriate level of difficulty?
- Yes _____ No _____ Do they focus on concepts, generalizations, and applications?
- Yes _____ No _____ Do they tie in to current events?
- Yes _____ No _____ Do they apply to life outside of school?
- Yes _____ No _____ Are they properly scaffolded?
- Yes _____ No _____ Are the suggested learning processes well suited to the content?
- Yes _____ No _____ Are integration activities clearly social studies driven?
- Yes _____ No _____ Are the activities and assignments cost effective?

Assessment and Evaluation

- Yes _____ No _____ Do assessment items and activities clearly reflect the social education goals?
- Yes _____ No _____ Do they focus on major social studies understandings instead of trite facts?
- Yes _____ No _____ Do they incorporate skills meshed with the content?
- Yes _____ No _____ Is there an absence of memorization and regurgitation of miscellaneous facts?
- Yes _____ No _____ Do the assessment and evaluation measures, as a whole, reflect the big picture of the unit?

If you are expected or mandated to use district-adopted social studies textbooks, be aware that:

- *Typically the activities found in the teacher's manual were written by outside vendors, so you should always ask whether each activity matches the goal and promotes understanding of the big idea(s). Other questions to ask relate to level of difficulty, feasibility and cost effectiveness. (See Chapter 11 for additional principles.)*
- *Social studies time should not be used as a venue for engaging students in round-robin reading (as this is likely to make your students hate the subject). View the textbook as one of multiple information sources promoting silent or paired reading to gather data to be discussed later and expanded through interactive narrative, or perhaps the use of an appropriate literary source, video, or other resource that promotes depth of understanding.*
- *The supplemental materials that often accompany the textbook series may be effective for a learner who needs practice on a particular set of skills or who faces comprehension issues. However, they are unlikely to be useful as activities for the class as a whole.*

Technology

Social studies-related websites offer a broad selection of lesson plans, instructional resources and activities. Our advice is “Teacher, beware!” Do not assume that an activity is appropriate just because it exists in cyberspace or calls for students to use a computer or other technology. We suggest the same guidelines for making decisions about technology that we offer for selecting other activities. The litmus test it must pass is, “Does the technology-based lesson plan or activity match your goals?” Simple relevance to the topic is not enough.

Although we believe the lessons you design will be richer and more relevant to your students' lives than ones you may find on the Internet, that does not mean you should not consult lesson plans for ideas or resources. For example, many historical sites have accompanying lesson plans, including primary source materials. United Streaming (streaming.discoveryeducation.com/) provides lesson plans and multimedia resources on a range of topics. These multimedia resources (e.g., reenactments of historical events) can be very useful for providing a visual account of the past, which students can have a difficult time imagining through text alone.

Technology Tips

Social Studies on the Internet (Berson, Cruz, Duplass, & Johnston, 2006) is an annotated collection of websites to consider as you plan your units. One of its features is a series of chapters organized according to content topics aligned with the NCSS strands. Another is its listing of professional organizations related to social studies that maintain their own websites. Online journals such as Reading On Line (ROL) (1997–2005) (www.reading.org) also offer information regarding the use of technology to enhance learning in the content areas.

Children's Literature

Authentic children's literature selections can be desirable components of social studies units. Often these are non-fictional selections because social studies is about real human activities and experiences. Fanciful stories or folklore selections usually belong in language arts rather than social studies, even if they have some relevance to the social studies unit

topic. For example, if you were planning a series of lessons about the executive branch of our federal government, including where our president lives, *The Story of the White House* (Waters, 1991) would be a much better choice than *Woodrow, the White House Mouse* (Barnes & Barnes, 1998). After students have developed a realistic perspective on the presidency, you might want to share the Barnes and Barnes text during literacy and ask students to distinguish fact from fantasy. At that point you might even want to talk about the possible motivation behind the authors' decision for presenting playful/fanciful characters.

In several other places in this text (particularly in Chapter 12) we have discussed the pitfalls to avoid when seeking to accomplish curricular integration. Remember, wise integration demands much more than simply selecting literature that connects to the topic under study.

Throughout this text, we offer you guiding principles to assist in your planning. For example, in Chapters 10 and 11 we elaborate on strategy and activity selection, and in Chapter 9 we provide guidelines for assessment. The planning tool on government in Appendix A and the unit on shelter in Chapter 3 underscore the importance of a goals-oriented approach. We encourage you to consider these templates and the tools offered in this chapter as you plan your year to ensure a solid social studies program.

Frequently Asked Questions

While there is general agreement that planning is one of the most important responsibilities of a classroom teacher, it also is one of the most difficult. If you are beginning teaching, shifting grade levels, or changing curricula, planning can become overwhelming. Over the past several years, we have collected questions posed by professionals faced with planning issues. Following are our responses to those most frequently asked. We know that you will identify with many of them, and we hope our thoughts will stimulate your thinking. We encourage you to engage in conversation with your colleagues about these and other planning matters. Planning issues are ongoing due to changes in national and state standards, new testing requirements, changes in local school board policies, and so forth. Getting planning changes on the table is the first step in maintaining a powerful social studies program in your classroom.

How can I avoid becoming simply a textbook teacher? Adopt the high road! The sooner you realize that if you are a true professional who will never be replaced by technology or textbooks, the happier you will be. Spend a major portion of your mental energy on goals and big ideas—even when you simply do not have time to create comprehensive units of your own. Do not hesitate to borrow units from others to get you started. The secret is to internalize and personalize the content. You need to deconstruct and then reconstruct it for yourself so you can model these practices for your students.

Accept the fact that the textbook is a single source developed for the full range of instructional situations. Help your students to realize its limitations. Engender curiosity and help students develop a realization that there is so much to learn outside the boundaries of a single source. Once students experience that for themselves, they will amaze you. A teacher recently remarked “I cannot possibly teach everything my students need to know even at my grade level. It has been calculated that there are over 300 standards and benchmarks. My challenge is to open their heads and their hearts to the world. There are unlimited resources we can tap. I could get overwhelmed if I did not pay close attention to the goal and big idea pieces. They rein in my responsibility and help me maintain integrity when it comes to instruction and accountability.”

How can I incorporate the state and national standards and yet not be overwhelmed by them? Familiarize yourself with them. Start with your existing curriculum and the units you have developed. Use the standards as a filter to determine what

you need to add to align your plans more closely with them. (See the set of questions listed in the Local Curriculum Guides section of this chapter).

Suppose you were developing a unit on state government. In reviewing the state standards you realize you have not included the core democratic values such as common good. That observation can lead you to add material on core democratic values to your lesson focusing on elected officials and the role and function they play in deciding what is best for their constituency.

If you start with a blank slate and try to plan a yearlong program around standards, you probably will feel deflated and frustrated. The standards were never intended to be taught in sequence or as separate entities. They are guidelines for assessing the comprehensiveness of unit plans structured around topic-specific goals and big ideas.

What do I do if I'm handed a pacing guide and told "this is what you need to follow?" First of all, don't panic! All of the pacing guides we have examined set minimal expectations and none of them dictate how you will teach. Generally speaking, they contain skills such as finding absolute locations, using longitude and latitude, reading timelines, and recalling factual information. Some call for writing opportunities such as taking a position and defending it or applying the core democratic values to a situation.

Take a deep breath. Step back. Then ask "How can I build the specified elements in my upcoming social studies unit in meaningful ways within the designated time frame (because a quarterly assessment typically follows)?"

When it is all said and done, the pacing guide establishes minimal conditions. That is the good news. Your challenge remains the creation of robust instructional plans which far exceed what you are required to include. If you fail to exploit the degree of autonomy that you have and simply drill and grill, neither you nor your students will get excited during social studies time.

How can I avoid getting so stressed about standardized testing? Find out what content and skills are expected at your grade level. For example, if students in fifth grade are expected to write a persuasive essay, understand cause and effect, or use longitude and latitude to locate specific places, find appropriate and natural places within your units for acquiring and practicing these skills. Being knowledgeable about test content serves as one more informant for developing a robust social studies program.

Consider preparing a matrix and plotting where you can naturally embed potentially testable content and skills. Periodically administer assessments in standardized testing formats, making sure students work independently. These strategic moves will promote efficacy and a realization that taking a test is "not such a big deal."

How do I figure out what my goals are? The academic disciplines are means of generating and systematizing knowledge. The school subjects that draw from them are means of preparing students for life in our society by equipping them with essential knowledge, skills, values, and dispositions. We want students not just to remember what we teach them in school, but to access and use it in appropriate application situations. These goals will not be met if students simply memorize disconnected bits of information.

It is important to emphasize goals of understanding, appreciation, and life application. *Understanding* means the students learn both the individual elements in a network of related content and the connections among them so they can explain the content in their own words. If they have been engaged in a unit on Mexico, for example, they ought to be able to explain the idea that factors contributing to the types of work people do include geographic location, education, local needs, personal choice, and so forth.

Appreciation means that students value what they are learning because they understand that there are good reasons for learning it. During the unit on Mexico, we would

hope students would come to appreciate the range of ways families celebrate (and might even adopt similar practices for their own special events) or value and respect the range of shelter types that exist in Mexico because of the climate, available economic resources, or personal choices.

Life-application goals are accomplished to the extent students retain their learning in a form that makes it useable when needed in other contexts. For example, if students have been learning about opportunity cost in the context of virtually shopping at open air markets in Mexico, they should be able to apply the decision-making model in their own lives. They can be encouraged to discuss with their families how they decide what to buy when they go to the city market or grocery store. They will soon realize that whenever anyone goes shopping, there are some things s/he needs to give up and that decisions involve choices.

How do I go about developing powerful ideas for my units? While it might sound boring—or perhaps even slightly simplistic—we suggest you begin by reading the section in a current encyclopedia (or a reliable online encyclopedia) that focuses on your specific topics. Continue by reading supplemental texts on the subject. Your social science college textbooks along with your class notes can be other useful references. For example, if you took an introductory course in political science, it could serve you well if you were planning a unit on government. The NCSS themes referenced earlier along with the chapters in this text focusing on disciplinary knowledge can be very useful. Grade-level social studies textbooks and authentic children’s literature related to the topic are other possibilities for helping you formulate your ideas.

For our unit on government (the planning tool for which is located in Appendix A) we used all of the above resources. Our planning tool illustrating government provides examples of the big ideas we included. The other big ideas are listed below. Focus on *selected* understandings from the following list:

Main Ideas to Develop

- *A community is a place where people live, work, play, and share special times.*
- *People in a community work together, accomplish tasks, and achieve goals through cooperation.*
- *Members of communities are called citizens.*
- *Good citizens tend to be respectful, to be responsible, to think and act for the good of the community, and to be open to ideas of others that may be different from their own.*
- *Rules are designed to remind people of their rights and responsibilities. They help people get along, keep things fair, protect individual and public property, and keep people safe.*
- *A community (e.g., township, town, suburb, city) is a place where people live and usually have many common needs and wants. Among them are community services.*
- *Many people work for the community to make it a better place to live.*
- *Different communities have different needs based on their location and size.*
- *Families pay money to the community. This money is called taxes. Tax money pays for the community services.*
- *People living in a community also need rules and laws.*
- *Laws are rules made by the government leaders of the community that everyone in the community must follow.*
- *Leaders are elected by the people (of voting age) to make and enforce the laws.*
- *In some communities, the mayor is the chief leader. In other communities there are township boards. Other leaders help the mayor, manager, or board watch over the community.*

- *A state is made up of many communities.*
- *Citizens of voting age have the opportunity to elect leaders for the state.*
- *Our state government focuses on the services such as higher education, recreation, state highways, a system of justice, and licensing regulations. The state government handles matters that affect people throughout the state.*
- *The U.S. government is defined as people running the country.*
- *The law-making branch of our U.S. government is made up of men and women elected by the people from the state that they represent. They are called senators and representatives. They are also called legislators. Together they are known as the U.S. Congress.*
- *The leader of our government is elected by the people of our country who are of voting age. The leader is known as the president.*
- *Our president is Barack Obama. He lives and works in the White House. The president is elected by the voters in the United States to serve as the leader of our country. The president's position is voted on by the people every four years, and the same person cannot serve more than eight years.*
- *The power of the presidency goes with the office. When Barack Obama leaves the office, the new president will have the power and Mr. Obama will be an ordinary citizen.*
- *In the United States, we have two major political parties: Democrats, who tend to want more services and more taxes to pay for them, and Republicans, who tend to want fewer services and fewer taxes.*
- *Any U.S. citizen can run for office when he/she becomes an adult. The person running for office is called a candidate.*
- *The candidate has a platform—a list of ideas that he/she supports. In speeches and printed campaign materials, the candidate explains what he/she wants government to do and why. On election day, voters decide who they want to represent them and why. Candidates who receive the most votes win.*
- *The U.S. government makes the rules and laws that affect everyone in the United States.*
- *The U.S. government does many useful things that keep our country running smoothly.*
- *A lot of people work for the United States in an effort to make life better for its citizens.*
- *Voting is a method by which people choose among several alternatives.*
- *A democracy is a form of government in which people take an active role in the decision making.*
- *A ballot is the list of names and offices (and sometimes ideas about certain issues) on which voters make their choices.*
- *It would be difficult and confusing for people to try to live and work together with no rules or laws—no government.*
- *The earliest societies were small ones ruled by tribal leaders. Later, societies grew to become nations ruled by kings or queens.*
- *People came to America long ago because they were unhappy with their home countries. They came seeking liberties and happiness.*
- *At first, they lived in colonies [Show map of colonial United States] that were controlled by the King of England. But they wanted to govern themselves, so they declared their independence and fought a war against England to gain their freedom. They won the war and became a new country called the United States.*
- *The Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution are important governmental documents that guarantee rights and freedoms to the people.*
- *Governments can be classified as democracies or dictatorships.*
- *Customs and beliefs (part of culture) are reflected in governments around the world.*
- *Government services are needed to do the things that the people cannot do by themselves.*

- *All governments in the United States (e.g., community, township, city, state, and federal) provide some services for people.*
- *To pay for the services, the government collects money from the people. The money is referred to as taxes.*
- *Regulations (rules and laws) are designed to help people get along, keep things fair, protect individual and public property, and keep people safe.*
- *Government cannot be expected to do everything for its people.*
- *Volunteering is the act of giving time and sometimes money to promote a cause, provide a service or work to solve a problem without making new laws.*
- *Volunteering is one way to practice responsible citizenship.*
- *When enough people volunteer to solve a problem, the need for making more laws or raising taxes to pay for the additional service is lessened.*
- *Individuals can personally contribute time and money to help solve problems that affect members of the community.*

How do I address multicultural education (often referred to as diversity) in planning my social studies units? Diversity comes in many forms. If it is truly respected and integrated into children's lives, it needs to be affirmed early and be threaded throughout the K–12 curriculum both formally and informally. We have embedded it throughout our text rather than treated it in a separate chapter.

In our chapter on learning community we suggest a unit on childhood as the springboard for discussing the similarities among children as well as the uniqueness of every individual and the importance of differences. In the chapter on homework we promote the learning of all students. The backgrounds and cultures of students in your classroom are not simply ethnic additives, but contributors to everyone's learning, such as when you create expanded social studies lessons using family response data.

We also suggest the importance of promoting empathy and avoiding stereotypes when selecting children's literature. Instructional materials such as textbooks, videos, pictures, artifacts, and websites often contain such stereotypes, so you will need to bring up other examples. We encourage you to promote multiple perspectives throughout your units, partly because this creates natural ways of instilling diversity.

We view multicultural education as a way of looking at the world. We promote social and cultural capital by giving all students access to depth of social knowledge. The classroom teacher can make enormous positive differences for all children, and social studies is a natural venue for living multiculturally.

We find it ironic that pull-out programs often call for diverse students to be excused from social studies lessons and assigned to ESL sessions, speech therapy, special reading groups, and such. We encourage you to schedule social studies when all of your students can be in attendance. Other classroom guidelines include the following:

- *Expect that students be respectful and thoughtful of one another.*
- *Hold appropriately high expectations for all children and build in strategies that help them succeed at their grade level.*
- *Model "Teacher as Learner." Share the pleasures of learning about new places, unfamiliar customs, beliefs and values. Be matter-of-fact when dealing with differences. Model and discuss how to encounter and deal with unfamiliar people and situations.*
- *Initiate frequent and open communication with all families.*
- *Get to know families so you can draw on them as resources that can enhance specific aspects of the curriculum.*
- *Plan in-school activities that include families with an eye toward inclusiveness.*

When do I integrate? The short answer is: When it makes sense. Start with your primary content focus. For example, do not allow your social studies time to turn into an extended literacy period. Using round robin reading to cover the social studies text is a poor instructional choice for either subject.

Ask yourself questions such as “Would an outsider clearly recognize the lesson as social studies? Is the content drawn from other subjects authentic or enriching? Is it obvious that if I use skills from math or literacy, students are being asked to apply them in social studies settings to bring more meaning to both the content and the skills?”

Integration certainly should not be adopted as a shortcut. Rather, the content, skills, and activities included should be educationally significant and desirable even if they did not involve the cross-subjects feature. Secondly, the content, skills, and activities should foster rather than disrupt or modify the accomplishment of major social studies goals.

How do I select appropriate instructional strategies and activities? The possibilities are endless. The key to their effectiveness is their cognitive engagement potential—the degree to which they get students actively thinking about and applying content, preferably with conscious awareness of their goals and the development of the big ideas.

All sorts of diversity exist within any classroom, so make room for variety. Often the content or skills lend themselves naturally to certain strategies or activities. For example, content associated with a faraway place unfamiliar to your students would be well suited to a virtual field trip; the study of local community officials would lend itself well to an on-site visit by the mayor or member of the city council; and the history of shelter might best be developed through the use of an interactive timeline. Other topics lend themselves to debate, case studies, role plays, or simulations. Typically, we think of instructional strategies as means of introducing and developing new content with the whole class, and activities as means of processing and applying the learning (as a whole class, in small groups or individually).

With all the emphasis on literacy, how do I spend a lot of time on it yet teach powerful social studies units? There are many natural connections. Reading, writing, speaking, and listening need to be about something; some literacy time ought to incorporate social studies content; and you are always using literacy when teaching social studies. However, guard against teaching new skills and new content simultaneously.

For example, if you are teaching the skill of selecting the main idea during literacy time, use familiar text. Then, during an upcoming social studies unit, design questions that focus on gleaning the big ideas from social studies sources. Increased use of informational text can motivate many students who prefer that kind of reading as well as those who have a strong interest in the social studies topic. It also can expand opportunities for home-school connections (e.g., use of newspapers, magazines, reference materials, sets of directions for cooking/fixing things, the Internet) that support both social studies and literacy (Duke & Bennett-Armistead, 2003).

Writing opportunities in social studies can allow students to construct and communicate understandings regarding the content and realize what they know or remain unclear about. Consider using independent brainstorming, table talk, or verbal pair share as opportunities for students to develop ideas to write about. Scaffold verbal collaboration by using modified word walls or other visual prompts as tools to jumpstart students' thinking so they can focus on ideas they want to express rather than on spelling. Students' writing vocabularies are far smaller than their speaking ones.

Similar cases for using literacy in the development of social studies understandings could be made for speaking and listening. Sharing ideas publicly through planned debate, reports, and class discussions promotes social studies learning, and so does asking students to listen for specific ideas and then think about and respond to questions.

What is the rule of thumb regarding time allocations for large-group, small-group, and individual work? The short answer is: It depends on your goals. Generally speaking, we would encourage you to provide a balance. Typically, when you are presenting new material, there will be more large-group time. As students engage in processing the information, they will then work more in small groups or individually.

Large-group time can be well spent for demonstration, delivery of new content through interactive discussion, storytelling, and reading a piece of children's literature as well as for review and debriefing. Small-group time should be spent on processing new information. If it is allocated for research, then the information needs to be fed back to the large group in ways that show connections to big ideas. Concept webs and data-retrieval charts are examples of organizers that can be effective for this process.

Individual work time provides students with opportunities to "test" their understanding and application of the key ideas and skills. We have observed a paucity of independent work time, especially work calling for real writing (not just filling in blanks). It is very important in order to assess individual understanding and the ability to apply what is learned. It can also contribute to a student's confidence level when faced with a standardized test.

Homework opportunities allow students to communicate about what they have learned in school by engaging family members in real-life application activities. This "co-construction" of expanded learning takes the meaning to a more sophisticated level and promotes a sense of efficacy. It encourages students to "explain" their world.

How often do I need to assess? In one sense you are always assessing. Before you launch a new unit, you want to find out what conceptions or misconceptions students have. During the unit, you want to find out what they are learning. At the end, you want to find out what they have retained and are applying. It does not stop there either because using what they have learned in new ways across units is the true test of retention.

Assessments are important even in the early grades. They send the message to students that content and skills are important and that they are expected to engage in the learning process. Recently, a second grade teacher aptly stated, "I want my students to realize early on that they are not tourists in my classroom. They are there to learn. I assess large group, small group, and individuals in a host of ways. Frequently, I ask them to assess themselves and each other using guidelines we establish together. We are kidding ourselves if we ignore the connection between high expectations and student achievement."

How do I get families excited about participating in homework assignments? Begin the year with a newsletter that includes your vision regarding home-school connections and use other venues such as your classroom website, weekly communications to families, parent conferences, and PTA meetings to elaborate on this practice. Explain that the social studies homework assignments are viewed as occasions for discussing and applying what has been learned in school in authentic situations. Underscore the importance of collaboration—repeating over and over that family members, including babysitters, neighbors, and other familiar adults, are encouraged to participate. Explain also that the diversity of responses will be used in extended social studies lessons. The responses will not be viewed as right or wrong but as opinions or reports of experiences. Sometimes the data will be tallied, graphed, and charted, but the underlying goal is to increase the meaningfulness of the social studies content.

When you assign home activities, make sure you use the responses as an integral part of subsequent lessons—and in a timely fashion. For students who seemingly have little or no family support, offer adult volunteers to assist before school or during other appropriate times. Do not get discouraged if at the beginning of the year only a small percentage of students and their families respond. Keep working to build "habits" of good practice. See Chapter 13 for more discussion on homework.

Summary

Planning around goals and powerful ideas sets the stage for powerful social studies teaching. Backward planning means starting with your desired results for student learning, understanding, appreciating, and applying, and then working “backward” from there to figure out what doing that will take. A central criterion of good planning is alignment of all key parts. Good planning begins with attention to your yearlong social studies goals—not just learning of knowledge and skills prescribed for your grade level but also the development of related attitudes, beliefs, values, and dispositions to action. This agenda needs consistent attention throughout the year. Within this framework, unit planning begins with identification of the most powerful ideas associated with the unit topic. These ideas then become the content base for your lessons, activities, and assessments. Weekly and daily planning then

are needed to fit your lessons, activities, and assessments.

Many tools are available to assist you in your planning, including national, state and local social studies standards and curriculum guides, college textbooks, your elementary social studies textbook series, Internet websites, guides to children’s literature that relates to social studies topics, and your teaching colleagues. Standards documents are most useful as checklists for assessing existing plans and identifying ways to improve them, and curriculum guides specify the content (topics and skills) you are expected to teach at your grade level. It all begins, however, with goal-oriented specification of big ideas around which to structure the unit in general and each of its component lessons and activities. If you have done this correctly, both you and your students will know why the content base of each lesson and activity is important and how it can be applied to life outside of school.

Reflective Questions

1. Imagine that your school district decided to pilot an initiative that would provide social studies teachers with a three-hour block of time each week to work on planning. How would you spend the time, and what effects do you think it would have on your teaching?
2. What are some creative ways of making more time for planning? What do you think would be the results?
3. Goal-oriented planning is viewed as a major challenge by many teachers. Why do you think this perception exists? What could be done to address it?
4. Imagine you are a teacher in a setting where literacy and math are the top priorities. Your

background is heavily weighted toward social studies—and you believe you should be able to satisfy both. You are also committed to actualizing the NCSS aim that states “the primary purpose of social studies is to help young people develop the ability to make informed and reasoned decisions for the public good as citizens of a culturally diverse, democratic society in an interdependent world.” What steps will you take in your planning to ensure that you satisfy the priorities of your institution and at the same time prepare a powerful social studies program at your grade level?

Your Turn: Planning Your Social Studies Program for the Year

Locate the social studies curriculum documents and other available planning tools (e.g., NCSS and state social studies standards, textbooks, maps, globes, technology resources, copies of old standardized tests) that your building administrator, mentor teacher, and other colleagues have referenced. Add your notes from your college social science classes, instructional units you

have designed, and artifacts you have collected, including objects, photos, and pamphlets.

Set aside several hours for doing some overall social studies planning. If possible, pair up with your mentor or a peer teaching at the same grade level. Pose the question, “What do I want social studies to look like in my classroom this year?” List

your ideas on large chart paper. You might consider adding pictures or photos. Visual representations can serve as powerful self-monitoring tools throughout the year.

Think deeply about the NCSS aim for social studies: “The primary purpose of social studies is to help young people develop the ability to make informed and reasoned decisions for the public good as citizens of a culturally diverse, democratic society in an interdependent world.” List possible ways that you might do this during the year. Revisit the NCSS aim statement as you plan each of your units.

Draw a “portrait” of your ideal social studies learner and what s/he would look like by the end of the year. Revisit it before and after each unit. It too can serve you as a self-monitoring tool. Then, answer the following questions to get you started:

1. What are my overall social studies goals for the year?
2. Imagine that you are writing a letter to your students’ families describing your social studies program for the year. What would you include?

Think specifically about one unit.

3. What is the topic?
4. What are the over goals for the unit?
5. What are the big ideas I want to address?

We have included a sample list for a unit on government. If it fits your curriculum, use parts of it. Feel free to add others. Refer to other chapters for other lists (e.g., shelter, mountainous regions) or develop your own for your selected topic.

6. What resources do I have available?
7. How will I pre-assess?
8. How will I introduce my unit so that it is engaging and interesting to my students?
9. What strategies do I plan to use during the unit to develop the big ideas?
10. What sorts of authentic home assignments do I have in mind?
11. What do I have planned for a culminating activity?
12. What are my plans for an end-of-unit assessment?

HOW CAN I TEACH HISTORY POWERFULLY?

TEACHER VOICE

Trevor DeVeaux, Experienced Teacher

I start the unit I teach on the Atlantic Slave Trade by showing students, in silence, a series of powerful images of slavery. As the lights come on, and students sit stunned, I announce to students, “It started with an unsuccessful farmer. He was a religious man, who by all accounts meant well, but seemed doomed to fail.” My approach is purposeful. Even after many years of teaching this unit, I get the same feeling the students do when I see these images. However, these feelings do little to tap into context or causes. As a teacher, it is my job to help students ground their emotional reactions in the broader historical contexts and to provide students the opportunity to explore, empathize, and interpret for themselves.

Going back to our farmer, John Rolfe was a key figure in the struggling Jamestown settlement. Most published literature references his relationship with Pocahontas and the Powhatan tribes. However, he was also credited with cultivating tobacco, the cash crop that would save Jamestown and create the

demand for more investments, plantations, and laborers. “Was there a slave trade before Jamestown?” “Were the English colonies a target of slave traders before John Rolfe?” “Is John Rolfe the root cause of slavery in the English colonies, and ultimately, America?” These are the questions that I end up asking students. The burden of responsibility to answer the question, “Why?” has shifted from the teacher to the student. From here, we study historical figures and explore their roles in significant events, paying attention to cause and effect and chronological thinking.

After reading this chapter, I came away with a fresh perspective. I have faced the challenge of taking a big idea, and not allowing it to become watered down with dates, events, and out-of-context details, making the big idea confusing or forgettable. To teach powerfully, we must empower students to relate to history on a personal level. We must go beyond dates and events with stories of people who faced issues and decisions that impacted those around them, much like the decisions we face today.

A Perspective on the Relationship between History and the Social Sciences

The K–12 school subjects draw much of their content from their respective foundational disciplines. For social studies, the primary foundational disciplines are history, geography, and the social sciences (e.g., anthropology, economics, political science, psychology, and sociology). As we explained in Chapter 1, ongoing curricular disputes are often rooted in conflicting beliefs regarding the most appropriate relationship between social studies and its foundational disciplines. We believe historical study should not dominate the social studies but instead be an integral part of it. In fact, most states place equal emphasis on their content expectations for history, civics, economics, and geography for much of elementary school.

For a variety of reasons, however, history seems to be taught more often than the other social sciences in elementary social studies, especially in the upper grades. First, history involves biographical study and is incorporated in the study of holidays, frequent topics of the elementary school curriculum. Second, of all the social studies disciplines, teachers tend to feel most comfortable with and knowledgeable about history. Moreover, of all the social studies disciplines, history (e.g., historical fiction) is most frequently used with children's literature. During story time or guided reading, teachers are more likely to choose a history-oriented book.

History is an interpretive discipline, not an empirical science concerned with developing theories meant to have broad applicability and explanatory power. Historians do seek to develop explanations, and they also follow procedures for developing and interpreting evidence. However, their explanations focus on events in the past. Concerning the drafting of the U.S. Constitution, for example, historians seek to establish the chronology of key events and determine the motives and intentions of the framers so as to understand how the U.S. Constitution came to be written as it did. In the process, they draw on political science concepts and develop information that political scientists will find useful for their purposes, but they do not seek to develop and test political science generalizations (e.g., about relationships between mechanisms of government as described in constitutions and the ways that these tend to function in practice).

Historical information is mostly chronological and organized according to the place or people investigated (e.g., U.S. history or the history of the Seminole tribe) or according to the aspects of the human condition addressed (e.g., the history of medicine or warfare). The content in each of these “files” consists of an enormous collection of particulars, along with a few generalizations about trends over time or common patterns observed in parallel situations. Historical interpretations often conflict, if not on issues of what happened and in what order, then on issues of cause and effect (e.g., the possible causal roles of various factors that may have led to the Civil War and the roles that the

war may have played in causing subsequent events). These features of the historical knowledge base make it very difficult to decide what history to teach in the schools.

Another challenge is “whose history” to teach (Zimmerman, 2002). As historical study expanded from a main focus on political and military history to social and intellectual history that includes the contributions of traditionally underrepresented groups of people (e.g., women, people of color, children, and the elderly), educators needed to determine whose stories should be included. As Zimmerman argues, the storyline of U.S. history texts has remained the same (i.e., that the U.S. story of freedom is unique, exceptional, and superior to that of other countries), but the story has expanded to include a broader cast of characters. Educators’ development of multiculturalism and culturally responsive teaching has helped bring a greater focus on the stories and contributions of traditionally underrepresented groups. However, by including more stories, new dilemmas arise, such as what history to include when time for history in the curriculum is limited.



Coherent Content

Principle 5: Coherent Content: To facilitate meaningful learning and retention, content is explained clearly and developed with emphasis on its structure and connections.

Coherent content refers to content whose knowledge and skills are connected to each other, whereby the sequence of ideas or events make sense and the relationships are apparent. Coherent content is facilitated through the use of powerful ideas as an organizational tool. For example, coherent content does not refer to simply memorizing the causes of the U.S. Revolution in isolation as disconnected facts. Instead, content is coherent when students apply the thinking skill of analyzing cause and effect to each cause of the U.S. Revolution and study the causes in relationship to one another. Please see Chapter 14 for a more in-depth description of the principle.

History in Elementary Social Studies

Even though it now is clear that elementary students can learn many aspects of history with understanding, disagreements remain about how much history to teach in the elementary grades. A few social studies educators prefer to minimize the role of history and instead focus social studies on current events and issues, emphasizing critical discussion and reasoned decision making. Most social studies educators, however, believe that history deserves an important place in the curriculum for several reasons, including its value as background knowledge that students can draw upon to develop contexts for understanding current events and issues.

The underlying powerful ideas (generalizations) that are often referred to by historians as explanations and that students are exposed to in lessons and units include the following: continuous change is universal and inevitable; the rate of change within a society varies with such factors as the values of a society, the amount of pluralism in the society, and the extent of the society’s contacts with other cultures; events of the past influence events of the present; human beings in different stages of civilization react differently to similar environments, and so forth.

The K–12 social studies curriculum typically includes three years of American history and at least one year of world history, and most other social studies courses include significant historical strands. In elementary school, the primary grades typically include the holiday curriculum and units on the history of the students' families and the local community and on Native American and pioneer life. Fourth grade studies of the state or region usually include historical material, and fifth grade studies include at least a semester and usually a full year devoted to study of U.S. history. Sixth grade studies usually include historical material regarding the western hemisphere, the world, or ancient civilizations. We have provided a resource unit focusing on the American Revolution to illustrate a connected set of key ideas related to a specific time period as Appendix B. We have highlighted the powerful ideas critical to understanding the events and outcomes of the American Revolution.

Developments in Children's History Knowledge

Early research on children's history learning was heavily influenced by Jean Piaget's ideas about developmental stages, and it produced some initially discouraging results. In fact, for a time some social studies educators questioned the feasibility of teaching history to elementary students on the grounds that these students have not yet achieved the levels of cognitive development needed to learn history with understanding. However, subsequent debate and data collection and analysis led to the rejection of this argument. It is now generally accepted that elementary students can understand general chronological sequences (e.g., that land transportation developed from walking to horse-drawn carriages to engine-powered vehicles) even though they may be hazy about particular dates, and that they can understand age-appropriate representations of people and events from the past (especially narratives built around the goal-oriented activities of central characters with whom the students can identify) even though they might not be able to follow analytic treatments of abstract historical topics or themes (Barton, 1997; Barton & Levstik, 2004; Booth, 1993; Crabtree, 1989; Downey & Levstik, 1991; Thornton & Vukelich, 1988; Willig, 1990).

Barton and Levstik (1996) studied K–6 students' understanding of historical time by showing them pictures from various periods in American history, asking them to place the pictures in order and explain their reasoning. They found that even the youngest students could distinguish "long ago" from "close to now," explaining their judgments with reference to the relative modernity of the clothing, furniture, or objects shown in the pictures. Older students made increasingly differentiated temporal distinctions. Dates had little meaning for children before third grade; third and fourth graders understood their numerical basis; but only fifth and sixth graders typically connected particular dates with particular background knowledge.

Sansom (1987) noted that gradual advances occur in four key aspects of historical reasoning:

Causation. At first, children do not perceive any logic to historical causality—things happen without relationship to one another. The story "unfolds" but does not develop. Once children begin to realize that historical events have causes, they initially take a mechanistic view, thinking that events were the inevitable results of their preceding causal chains, and that they had to happen the way that they did. Later, children begin to understand that events have multiple causes that act in combination, that things could have turned out differently, that competing values of groups can cause conflict, that a location's physical and cultural geography, political climate, and economic conditions can cause certain things to happen, and that we cannot know all of the causes of events.

Change and continuity. At first, children view changes as unrelated rather than as progressions in a causal chain. Then they believe that everything can be traced back to a first cause and that everything that happened in the past is an antecedent to the present. Eventually they begin to view historical change as gradual transformation, realizing that only some aspects of the situation change and that these changes may range from the trivial to the radical. Continuous change is universal and inevitable.

Presentism, understanding motivation and intention of historical actors. Initially children do not empathize with people from the past. When exposed to accounts of what seem to be inexplicable behavior, they adopt a patronizing attitude, suggesting that the people acted as they did because they were stupid or not as developed as we are. Later they begin to understand that the people were acting rationally from their own perspectives. Initially they attribute vague or stereotyped motivation to these people (“his character,” “their religion”). Later they attribute more specific motives, although they still use a modern viewpoint. Finally, they begin to appreciate the need to reconstruct the probable perceptions and beliefs of historical actors, reasoning from whatever historical source materials may be available.

Evidence and historical method. At first, children equate evidence with factual information. They do not notice contradictory evidence or do not know how to make sense of it. Gradually, they come to understand that evidence must be interpreted, that different sources of evidence may conflict, and that historians need to follow disciplinary rules for evidence collection and use and then develop interpretations that are defensible but not final or definitive.

As a teacher, you can foster your students’ development toward more advanced levels of history learning by emphasizing higher-order thinking during discussions of historical events. You can help students understand generalizations, such as that conflict typically occurs when groups compete for resources and power or have different values. In teaching about the American Revolution, for example, you can explain that it was a major event that had multiple causes and multiple effects on government, including converting the colonies into a new nation, but few direct effects on everyday social and economic activities; note that the British might have won (and lead a speculative discussion about what might have happened subsequently); help students to empathize with the founders and appreciate that much of what they wrote into the Declaration of Independence and U.S. Constitution reflected their recent experiences with the British government (e.g., taxation without representation, forced quartering of troops in private homes); and help students recognize that accounts of the Revolution have been constructed by historians working from documents and artifacts that have survived from the time, and that different accounts conflict on some issues (e.g., the British have a different view of the nature of and justification for the Revolution than Americans do).

Hallden (1994) noted that history learning is complicated by the fact that students may process historical information using alternative frameworks that differ from the framework emphasized by a text author or teacher. Students tend to personify history by seeking explanations of historical events in the intentions, actions, and reactions of individuals, which hampers their efforts to follow lessons on general historical trends that are explained using structural rather than personal explanations.

Britt, Rouet, Georgi, and Perfetti (1994) asked students to read text selections, summarize them, and answer causal-temporal questions. Fourth graders’ summaries were disconnected lists of facts, fifth graders’ summaries were more coherent but focused on a sub-story rather than the main story, and sixth graders’ summaries were both coherent and focused on the main story. Students who gave more sophisticated summaries focused more on main events and learned more about the connections among them.

Barton (1992) described an emphasis on children's historical fiction in a case study of a fifth-grade unit on the American Revolution. He observed a heavy reliance on narrative structures, by both the teacher and the students, in representing knowledge about this historical period in speech and writing. The teacher and students used five overlapping structures to place their study of the Revolution into a narrative framework:

1. The unit as a whole was treated as a sequence of causally related events that together formed the "story" of the Revolution.
2. Each event was itself treated as a story with characters, problem, and a resolution.
3. These stories emphasized the feelings and actions of these individuals.
4. Fictional conversations (e.g., between King George and his advisors) were spontaneously created in order to convey information.
5. Nations were endowed with human characteristics (e.g., motives, goals, plans, and other features common to central figures in stories).

In subsequent research, Barton (1996) noted that although narrative structures help students remember connected details related to the main storyline of a narrative, they also can lead to oversimplification of historical trends and events. The fourth and fifth graders he studied often collapsed lengthy and complicated historical processes into short time frames and simple narratives, such as crediting famous people for singlehandedly bringing about monumental changes in a short period of time. For example, many spoke as if African-Americans began to be treated differently immediately after Martin Luther King, Jr. "gave a speech" and suddenly changed people's minds. Brophy and VanSledright (1997) found similar patterns in their interviews of fourth and fifth graders: Students described European explorers as though they were a small band of associates in close contact with one another and thought that they returned to their home countries and personally led groups of settlers to the New World. They also conceived of English colonies in North America as though they were all small villages similar to Plymouth Plantation.

Much of the students' knowledge was represented in the form of story-like narratives that featured a setting, a plot focused on the motives and goals of one or more focal individuals or groups, and a resolution that carried implications for the future of these people and others included in the story. The stories featured themes such as monarchs competing for power and glory through land claims and territorial wars, colonists uniting to proclaim and fight for their freedom from British rule, and pioneers struggling against adversity to establish new communities.

Less sophisticated versions often were vague or inaccurate about the temporal and geographic specifics of the settings, and many of them featured stories personalized around hero figures. More sophisticated versions were more specific and accurate about time and place, were formulated more as cause-and-effect explanations than as conventional stories, and described larger historical trends involving sizable populations or geographic areas rather than only recounting what happened to a particular individual or small group during the course of a particular event. There were few comments on the nature or quality of evidence, characterizations of the points of view of various stakeholder groups, references to alternative interpretations, or other indications of the kinds of historical reasoning brought to bear by disciplinary specialists.

The fifth graders were able to overcome tendencies toward "presentism" and other biases in order to identify and empathize with some of the people they studied, especially if these people were portrayed as heroic figures or as victims of oppression. To the extent that they were encouraged and helped to do so, they also showed an ability to see both sides of an issue, such as the contrast between King George's views and the American rebels' views of the events that led to the American Revolution. However, they did

not display advanced forms of historical empathy reflecting deep and contextualized knowledge of the people they studied. They did not, for example, evaluate historical figures' goals or strategies by taking into account the information available to the individuals at the time in question, or point to the individuals' prior philosophies or experiences that might have predisposed them toward particular views or courses of action.

The students expressed many inaccurate assumptions or misconceptions. Most of these were expressed prior to the instruction and were not repeated in the post-unit interviews, but some of them persisted, especially misconceptions related to the temporal or spatial relationships among the people and events being studied. The students clearly needed help in seeing how the historical content they were studying fit within the broader sweep of human history (e.g., contextualized with reference to timelines, landmark events and inventions, and social and political developments).

In the process of teaching history to fifth graders, VanSledright (2002) found it necessary to address affective as well as cognitive barriers to children's construction of historical interpretations. Initially, his students showed strong preferences for simple storylines, free of ambiguities or complications. They wanted "the true history." Later, after exposure to multiple interpretations reflecting conflicting biases, they swung to the other extreme, thinking that there is no way to know what really happened so that one account is as good as the next. Still later, after learning about and applying basic principles of historiography, they began to understand that some accounts were more defensible than others because they were supported by more convincing evidence and arguments. Despite this developing understanding, however, their ultimate interpretations of historical events were strongly conditioned by their preexisting knowledge and biases.

Research by Hynd and Guzzetti (1998) also suggests that teacher scaffolding of students' exposures to conflicting interpretations is needed to help them tolerate frustration and eventually achieve more sophisticated understandings. These authors found that students entered the study of Christopher Columbus with oversimplified heroic views of Columbus (e.g., he was adventurous, brave, and smart) that included some misconceptions (e.g., he was Spanish, landed on the North American continent, was the first to believe that the earth was round, and was regarded as a great man during his lifetime). They exposed the students to three different texts. The first was a traditional text that reinforced and elaborated the students' views of Columbus as unambiguously heroic. The second was a revisionist text that depicted Columbus as a greedy gold seeker who "discovered" only islands rather than continents and who cruelly mistreated the Native Americans he encountered. The third text offered a balanced view of Columbus's good and bad qualities, directly addressed and refuted common misconceptions about him, and concluded that if he had not sailed west and changed the world, someone else would have. The third text had the strongest impact on students, both in reducing their misconceptions and in inducing them to adopt a more nuanced rather than an unambiguously positive view of Columbus as a person. Most students apparently read the first text without noticing that some of its information contradicted their existing misconceptions, and many of them apparently rejected much of the content of the second text because they viewed it as biased.

Most of the research on children's thinking about history comes from studies of children in grades four and above. However, our own interviews with K–3 students included questions about historical topics. They revealed that these younger students possessed bits and pieces of historical knowledge that they picked up from the holiday curriculum at school or (more typically) from children's literature or media. Furthermore, the knowledge they did have was limited and often distorted by misconceptions. When shown an illustration of a tipi, for example, almost all of the students knew what it

was, calling it a tipi or an Indian tent. However, none of the lower primary students and fewer than 10 percent of the upper primary students gave accurate explanations when asked why some native tribes lived in tipis (i.e., because they were nomadic plains tribes who followed the buffalo and had to have portable housing). A majority of these students had never heard of nomadic societies, so they did not even mention portability and instead generated explanations such as that these tribes did not know how to make any other kind of home, or that tipis were constructed by people who lived alone or in very small families. Some explained that they were preferred by people who liked to do a lot of cooking and could do so inside a tipi because the smoke would go out the top, or that these tribes had surplus buffalo skins and needed something to do with them (because Native Americans never wasted anything). The students' ideas about pioneer log cabins were more accurate but infused with a contemporary bias. Most of them disparaged these cabins as homemade and primitive, lacking modern heat, light, and running water. Some of them thought the pioneers had no source of light in their cabins after sundown or that they had to tote water from a source a mile or more away. The latter students either did not know about wells or thought of them merely as holding containers for captured rainwater or water toted from a stream, not realizing that they tap underground water sources. When asked about life back in the cave days, many of the younger students provided responses clearly rooted in the Alley Oop or Flintstones cartoons (e.g., depicting people as traveling in vehicles with stone wheels).

Table 5.1 identifies and describes each challenge and offers suggestions for addressing these challenges.

Think carefully about how to teach cause and effect. Children need to understand that cause is an act that makes something happen, and that an effect is what happens as the result of a cause. Consider using dominoes to show cause and effect, which will engage children and help them see how each cause affects the next.

Problems with History Texts and Teaching

Older generations typically complain that younger generations are ignorant of history, and periodic knowledge surveys appear to bear this out. However, analyses indicate that today's students know about as much history (although not the same history) as the students of previous generations did. Performance levels have remained constant over the last 90 years, and students do about as well on history tests as they do on tests in other subjects (Paxton, 2003).

On the other hand, both past and current surveys provide little cause for celebration. After several exposures to U.S. history, most students remain indifferent and ill-informed about it (Thornton, 2005; VanSledright, 2002). One reason is that history texts are especially prone to the problems summed up in the phrases mile-wide but inch-deep, parade-of-facts, and trivial pursuit.

Commonly used fifth-grade U.S. history texts are difficult for students to understand because they lack coherence. Historical accounts should be built around causal chains indicating that events have causes and consequences. To learn history with understanding, students need to learn not only the elements in a chain, but also how these elements

TABLE 5.1 CHALLENGES ELEMENTARY STUDENTS FACE STUDYING HISTORY AND WAYS TO ADDRESS THESE CHALLENGES

Challenges Elementary Students Face	Suggestions for Addressing the Challenges
<p>Causation. Children do not tend to perceive any logic to historical causality—things happen without relationship to one another. The story “unfolds” but does not develop.</p>	<p>Show children literally how cause and effect works with dominoes. Instead of dominoes, consider using cereal boxes, labeled with a particular cause, to show how one cause leads to another, and so on.</p>
<p>Change and Continuity. Children tend to view changes as unrelated rather than as progressions in a causal chain.</p>	<p>Co-construct timelines using photographs and other visual aids to show how stories evolve due to changes in technology and inventions.</p>
<p>Presentism. The act of viewing past events and ideas through one’s contemporary lenses (e.g., considering everyone who opposed suffrage as sexist, rather than considering that beliefs about gender equality today are far more advanced than at the turn of the twentieth century).</p>	<p>Encourage students to first evaluate past events or ideas through their contemporary perspectives. Then, have students put on their “glasses from the past” and consider what the common beliefs at the time were. Have them consider what resources and technology were available at the time and what the predominant thinking/belief was about the topic(s) at hand.</p> <p><i>Note: This idea is challenging for students, but the more they practice the better they will understand differences between common beliefs in the past and common beliefs in the present.</i></p>
<p>Evidence and Historical Method. Children tend to equate evidence with factual information.</p>	<p>Explain that not all accounts are equally valid, and while we can never know for certain “what really happened,” some accounts are more valid than others.</p> <p>Whenever students encounter a source, have them answer a standard set of questions: who wrote it (and what might be the biases of the writer), when was it written, for what audience was it written and what kind of document is it. Using these responses, children should then compare sources and evaluate each source’s credibility.</p>

are related—why certain actions caused some event and why that event led to subsequent events. In this regard, Beck and McKeown (1988) identified three major problems in fifth-grade history texts:

1. Lack of evidence that clear content goals were used to guide text writing (the text read as chronicles of miscellaneous facts rather than as narratives built around connecting themes).
2. Unrealistic assumptions about students’ prior knowledge (i.e., key elements needed to understand a sequence often were merely alluded to rather than explained sufficiently).
3. Inadequate explanations that failed to clarify connections between actions and events (in particular, causal relationships).

Follow-up studies confirmed that fifth-grade students’ prior knowledge was much more limited and disconnected than the texts assumed and that attempts to learn from

the texts seldom produced accurate reconstructions of the main storyline. To address these problems, McKeown and Beck (1990, 1994) revised textbook passages to make them more coherent and explicit. Students who read the revised versions recalled significantly more of their content, especially material concerning the sequential relationships of and explanations for the main events depicted. A second intervention involved providing students with background knowledge to make them better prepared for the material they would be reading. This intervention also improved comprehension, although not as strongly as making the texts more coherent did.

McKeown and Beck also developed interventions to improve students' engagement with the materials. One study involved rewriting texts to make them more interesting as well as more coherent. Another involved encouraging students to reflect on what they were reading by asking them to pause several times during the reading to talk about what came to mind. This think-aloud intervention was later extended to a small-group format. All of these interventions had positive effects, illustrating some of the things that textbook authors and teachers can do to improve the effectiveness of history instruction for elementary students.

We recognize that it is unrealistic to expect novice teachers to operate without texts, and that it is unnecessary to ask veteran teachers to do so (although some may prefer this option). However, it is important to view the textbook as just one among many resources to draw on in planning a history curriculum designed to accomplish social studies goals. To overcome some of the limitations of textbooks, you will need to examine them in light of your major social education goals in order to identify what content to ignore or downplay and what content to emphasize. You may need to augment the useful content if major ideas or themes are not well developed in the texts, as well as to identify pointless questions and activities and develop other questions and activities that will support progress toward major goals. If the texts and their related activities and assignments are focused on disconnected names, dates, and miscellaneous facts instead of big ideas and their implications, students will perceive history as boring and pointless.

Most school history texts are written in a bland style that features passive constructions and avoidance of controversial content. Especially when written for children, these texts ought to feature lively narratives that capture the drama that is inherent in much of the content. Joy Hakim's series *A History of US* is a step in the right direction (Hakim, 2002).

The content emphasized in traditional history texts also leaves much to be desired. Political and military events and leaders are generally of less interest to elementary students than information about everyday life in the past and the influence of inventions; advances in freedom, equality and social justice; and inspirational biographical material on the people most responsible for these advances. Finally, for students from immigrant families and minority groups, the heavily Eurocentric focus of traditional history does not offer them much to identify with and care about. They are likely to view such history as "someone else's facts," with little connection to their lives and concerns (Holt, 1990).

These problems suggest that although there are deficiencies in U.S. students' knowledge of history, the remedy does not lie in teaching them more history, if this means teaching history the way it has been taught traditionally. A more promising remedy is to focus history teaching around major goals and big ideas, and teaching it for understanding, appreciation, and life application. We recommend establishing a network of basic understandings to provide a context for all history learning. Big ideas to emphasize in such a network include the following:

History is the study of the past. It includes the very recent past as well as ancient times, and the everyday lives of ordinary people in addition to the exploits of the famous and powerful. We study history to learn about developments through time in the human condition generally and in life at different places in the world; to learn about the origins

and development of our country and its institutions and traditions; to understand the many ways in which today's world has been shaped by decisions and events of the past; to understand how these past events have influenced contemporary beliefs, attitudes, and life experiences, including our own and those of the groups with which we identify; to note parallels in comparable situations that developed at different times and places; and to consider the potential implications of all of this for personal, social, and civic decision making.

Historical accounts are developed through study of what has been preserved from the past. Usually this includes not only archaeological remains but books, newspapers, maps, diaries, and other written material (and more recently, audiovisual material). These sources often disagree, especially when reporting on conflicts involving groups with competing interests. Usually there is at least some legitimacy to all the different points of view expressed. To construct defensible interpretations, historians need to sift through all of the relevant evidence (from people who were eyewitnesses on the scene versus dependent on reports from others, and those who were seemingly unbiased versus those who were committed to a particular group or point of view), then piece together a reconstruction that is consistent with the most credible evidence. This may include reference to situations in which the same events were perceived differently by different groups.

Historical study sometimes suggests “lessons” in the form of guidelines or cautions to keep in mind in coping with today's challenges. However, it is important to note the differences as well as the similarities between comparable situations. Also, developments that seem clear in hindsight may not have been very predictable at the time. To understand the thinking and behavior of people of the past, we need to adopt their purview—consider situations within the affordances and constraints of their time and place.

National Standards for History Teaching

In recent decades, the traditional history curriculum has been criticized as too concerned with perpetuating the status quo. Social studies educators who emphasize a global purview and world interdependence want to see U.S. history embedded more clearly within world history and taught in ways less likely to induce chauvinistic attitudes in Americans. Those concerned with multicultural issues want to see a more inclusive selection of topics, treated in ways that represent more diverse points of view. Those concerned with gender issues would like to see more emphasis on social history and the lives of everyday people (especially women), and correspondingly less emphasis on political and military issues. Social critics would like to see more representation of the activities and views of workers relative to capitalists, oppressed or voiceless minorities relative to the establishment, and so on.

These tensions boiled over in the 1980s and early 1990s in a series of highly politicized movements to reform state history standards and eventually establish national history standards (Cornbleth & Waugh, 1999; Nash, Crabtree, & Dunn, 1997; Symcox, 2002). A great many issues were involved, but the conflicts essentially pitted “traditionalists, who favored a single grand narrative celebrating a shared and triumphant national past, against revisionists, who favored a more pluralistic rendering of our nation's history, with fewer heroes” (Symcox, 2002, p. 3).

Eventually, the federal government commissioned the National Center for History in the Schools (NCHS) to develop “voluntary” standards to guide K–12 curriculum and instruction in history. After several years of development and revision, which included soliciting and responding to feedback from a broad range of stakeholders, the NCHS published sets of standards that the developers believed to be representative of a broad

consensus and thus not controversial. However, traditionalists denounced the standards as un-American—too reflective of political correctness and excessive multiculturalism, while at the same time insufficiently celebratory of America’s triumphs and heroes. This stance set off a lobbying effort that culminated in a U.S. Senate resolution condemning the standards.

While there has been much controversy regarding the development of history standards, the revised standards were published eventually in 1996 (NCHS, 1996). The standards address both content and process. Content refers to what knowledge and topics are taught. Process refers to the particular kinds of skills that are taught. Recall how you learned history. For many of us, history education involved rote memorization of dates and recall of facts. However, history is too complex to be boiled down to a set of dates and facts. Moreover, history involves more than understanding of content; it also involves a set of processes or thinking skills. Because our understanding of the past often changes with new research and re-analyses of the past, students need to be introduced to the kinds of processes and tools historians use in order to draw their own conclusions about accounts of the past to be able to analyze documents, evaluate them for credibility, and draw their own conclusions.

The *process standards* focus on five groups of historical thinking skills:

1. *Chronological thinking.* Distinguishing among past, present, and future time; identifying the temporal structure of historical narratives or stories; establishing temporal order in the students’ own historical narratives; measuring and calculating calendar time; interpreting data presented in timelines; creating timelines; and explaining change and continuity over time.
2. *Historical comprehension.* Reconstructing the literal meaning of a historical passage; identifying the central questions that the narrative addresses; reading historical narratives imaginatively; developing historical perspectives; drawing on the data in historical maps; drawing on visual and mathematical data presented in graphics; and drawing on visual data presented in photographs, paintings, cartoons, and architectural drawings.
3. *Historical analysis and interpretation.* Formulate questions to focus inquiry or analysis; identify the author or source of a historical document or narrative; compare and contrast differing sets of ideas, values, personalities, behaviors, and institutions; analyze historical fiction; distinguish between fact and fiction; compare different stories about a historical figure, era, or event; analyze illustrations in historical stories; consider multiple perspectives; explain causes in analyzing historical actions; challenge arguments of historical inevitability; and hypothesize influences of the past.
4. *Historical research capabilities.* Formulate historical questions; obtain historical data; interrogate historical data; and marshal needed knowledge of the time and place to construct a story, explanation, or historical narrative.
5. *Historical issues-analysis and decision-making.* Identify issues and problems in the past; compare the interests and values of the various people involved; suggest alternative choices for addressing the problem; evaluate alternative courses of action; prepare a position or course of action on an issue; and evaluate the consequences of a decision.

The NCHS (1996) Content Standards are divided into three sections. There are separate U.S. history and world history standards for Grades 5–12, organized chronologically according to historical eras. For example, one of the eras identified for the U.S. history standards is The Revolution and the New Nation (1754–1820s). Standards associated with this era call for learning about: the causes of the American Revolution, the ideas and interests involved in forging the revolutionary movement, and the reasons for the

American victory; the impact of the American Revolution on politics, economy, and society; and the institutions and practices of government created during the Revolution and how they were revised between 1787 and 1815 to create the foundation of the U.S. political system based on the U.S. Constitution and the Bill of Rights.

The content standards for Grades K–4 subsume both U.S. and world history. They are not organized chronologically within historical eras but instead are organized within eight historical themes identified for emphasis in the early grades:

1. Family life now, in the recent past, and in various places long ago.
2. History of the local community and how communities in North America varied long ago.
3. The people, events, problems, and ideas that created the history of the state.
4. How democratic values came to be and how they have been exemplified by people, events, and symbols.
5. The causes and nature of various movements of large groups of people into and within the United States, now and long ago.
6. Regional folklore and cultural contributions that helped form our national heritage.
7. Selected attributes and historical developments of various societies in Africa, the Americas, Asia, and Europe.
8. Major discoveries in science and technology, their social and economic effects, and the scientists and inventors responsible for them.

The basic standards statement (NCHS, 1996) and related publications from NCHS elaborate on the standards and provide suggested activities to use in teaching to them. For a complete statement of the standards and information about related publications, see the NCHS website (www.ssnet.ucla.edu/nchs/standards/).

We believe that elementary teachers should familiarize themselves with these standards, especially if they form the basis for the history standards adopted by their state or school district. However, we also believe that the standards need to be adapted, rather than taken at face value, if they are used to inform instructional planning in the elementary grades.

NCSS Standards Relating to History



The National Council for the Social Studies (2010) Curriculum Standards include a theme, *Time, Continuity, and Change*. In the early grades, it calls for experiences that allow students to demonstrate an understanding that different people may describe the same event or situation in diverse ways, citing reasons for the differences in views; demonstrate an ability to use correctly vocabulary associated with time such as past, present, future, and long ago; read and construct simple timelines; identify examples of change; recognize examples of cause and effect relationships; compare and contrast different stories or accounts about past events, people, places or situations, and identify how they contribute to our understanding of the past; identify and use various sources for reconstructing the past, such as documents, letters, diaries, maps, textbooks, photos, and others; demonstrate an understanding that people in different times and places view the world differently; and use knowledge of facts and concepts drawn from history, along with elements of historical inquiry, to inform decision-making about and action-taking on public issues.

The middle grades should include experiences that allow students to demonstrate an understanding that different scholars may describe the same event or situation in different ways but must provide reasons or evidence for their views; identify and use key

concepts such as chronology, causality, change, conflict, and complexity to explain, analyze, and show connections among patterns of historical change and continuity; identify and describe selected historical periods and patterns of change within and across cultures, such as the rise of civilizations, the development of transportation systems, and the growth and breakdown of colonial systems and others; identify and use processes important to reconstructing and reinterpreting the past, such as using a variety of sources, providing, validating, and weighing evidence for claims, checking credibility of sources and searching for causality; develop critical sensitivities such as empathy and skepticism regarding attitudes, values, and behaviors of people in different historical contexts; and use knowledge of facts and concepts drawn from history, along with methods of historical inquiry, to inform decision-making about and action-taking on public issues.

As an example of the standards brought to life, the original NCSS standards document (NCSS, 1994) describes an activity in which small groups of primary grade students are engaged in studying photographs taken in their own community in the past. To begin, each group receives a different photo and is instructed to study the photo and answer questions such as: “What is the most important thing you saw in the photo?” “Tell two things about the photo that surprised you.” “Find two things in the photo that you might not see if it were taken today.” “Give the photo a title that accurately describes its contents.” Next, the groups exchange photos and each group repeats the exercise with a different photo. Then, groups that examined the same photo join together and share their responses. These experiences help students appreciate the fact that different observers will notice different details and take away different impressions from the same historical source. Follow-up activities include engaging the class in discussion of which photo was the oldest and having pairs of students collaborate to develop two illustrations of some aspect of the community (e.g., transportation, schools, and stores): one showing it as it appears today and the other as it appeared long ago.

In another example, students study the experiences of immigrants by talking with family, friends, or neighbors about their own or their ancestors’ immigrant experiences; gathering information about why the people left their homeland and what they thought about living in the United States; engaging in class discussion and developing lists of responses about each of these two topics; and conducting group interviews with recent immigrants whom the teacher recruits to come to the class for this purpose. Other examples included engaging students in learning about and then planning dramatic reenactments of interactions among key people involved in significant events in history, such as conversations among people participating in the American Revolution.

Teaching History for Understanding, Appreciation, and Life Application

Theory and research on teaching history for understanding suggest several principles that are particularly relevant to elementary teachers. First, *focus instruction on the study of particular individuals and groups of people rather than on impersonal abstractions*; study these people with emphasis on developing an understanding of and empathy for their contexts and points of view; and focus on general trends in the evolution of social systems rather than on particular dates or detailed chronologies (Knight, 1993; Levstik & Barton, 2005; Willig, 1990). Children in the primary grades are interested in and can understand accounts of life in the past that are focused on particular individuals or groups (e.g., cave dwellers, Native American tribes, the Pilgrims, or an individual’s life on a plantation or on the frontier in the eighteenth century). Fifth graders are interested in and can understand an introduction to a chronological study of U.S. history.

Represent historical material to students in the form of narratives that depict people with whom they can identify pursuing goals that they can understand. For example, primary-grade children can understand that the “Pilgrims” were persecuted for their religious beliefs and left England because they wanted to be free to practice their religion as they saw fit, but they could not follow an abstract analysis of the theological differences between the “separatists” and the Church of England. Similarly, fifth-graders can understand that the American colonists sold raw materials to England and purchased finished products manufactured in England, but they could not follow an abstract discussion of “the rise of mercantilism.” Incorporating history teaching within strong narrative storylines is helpful for elementary students generally (relative to older students), but especially for students with attention deficits or other learning disabilities (Ferretti, MacArthur, & Okolo, 2001).

Virtually all sources of advice on teaching history emphasize *fostering empathy with the people being studied*. Just as there is a danger of chauvinism when we study contemporary cultures other than our own, there is a danger of presentism when we study people from the past with benefit of hindsight. Children are especially prone to presentism, often believing that people in the past were not as smart, sophisticated, or enlightened as we are today because they did not have all of the social and technical inventions that ease our contemporary lives. You can foster their development of empathy by helping them appreciate such things as bow-and-arrow hunting, horse-drawn carriages, or butter churns as ingenious inventions that represented significant advances for their times, not just as tools that seem primitive when compared with today’s technology.

History educators also agree on the value of *exposing students to varied data sources and providing them with opportunities to conduct historical inquiry*, to synthesize and communicate their findings and to learn from listening to or reading biography and historical fiction selections as well as conventional textbooks (Fertig, 2005; Harms & Lettow, 1994; Lamme, 1994; Levstik & Barton, 2005; Sunal & Haas, 1993). It is important, however, for you as the teacher to *guide your students in their use of these varied data sources*.

Elementary students lack a rich base of prior knowledge to inform their efforts at critical thinking and decision making, so they have difficulty knowing what to believe or how to assess conflicting accounts. They will need to learn that textbooks, and even eyewitness accounts or diaries, tend to emphasize aspects of events that support the authors’ biases and interests. In studying the American Revolution, for example, it is helpful to expose students to information sources that will help them realize that King George had a quite different view from that of the American rebels concerning how the events leading up to the revolution should be interpreted, and thus whether or not revolution was justified. Similarly, the students might come to see that the Boston Massacre would be viewed (and described later) quite differently by a British soldier seeking to avoid a confrontation than by an American rebel seeking to provoke one.

Many topics traditionally taught from a single point of view can be taught much more insightfully from a global and multicultural perspective. For example, traditional Columbus Day instruction typically was confined to a Euro-centric version of discovery of the New World in 1492, featuring a dramatized and largely inaccurate version of events occurring before and during Columbus’s first voyage. A more accurate and informative version would depict the initial voyage as the beginning of an ongoing encounter between previously separated civilizations that eventually led to a great deal of cultural exchange and dramatically affected events not only in Europe and America but also in Africa (via the slave trade).

It is important that students see included in history (as represented in your curriculum) the racial, ethnic, and social class groups with which they identify. Several studies have shown that students take special interest in and assign special importance to people and events in history that accommodate such identification (Almarza, 2001; Epstein,

2001). For example, although European-American students talk about U.S. history primarily in terms of the establishment and growth of the nation and of its civic and political traditions, African-American students focus much more specifically on people and events related to African-American freedom and equality (Epstein, 2001). They also place relatively more trust in family members and relatively less in textbooks as sources of accurate historical information.

Rose (2000) took advantage of this by organizing her fourth graders' study of Michigan history around the questions, "Why have people moved to Michigan, and what was it like for them?" This provided many opportunities for students to gather information from their relatives, and in the process encounter evidence that conflicted with their own prior views or with what they were reading in their textbooks. For example, most of the students viewed racial discrimination as a southern problem that African-Americans could escape by moving to northern states (as many of their grandparents did in 1945 to 1965, coming to Michigan to take jobs in the auto industry). Consequently, they were surprised to find that their own or their African-American classmates' relatives frequently told of being unable to get served at certain restaurants and hotels, having trouble buying homes, or attending largely segregated schools in northern states. These stories produced a lot of curiosity, cognitive dissonance, and other motivation for students to conduct additional inquiry focused on understanding why these problems existed even in the North.

Engaging students in learning about their own family histories is probably the most natural and motivating way to introduce them to both the content of history and the processes of historiography. Many methods of incorporating family history have been suggested, such as interviewing family members about an assigned topic; developing (with their assistance) a report along with supporting documents, photos, or artifacts; and then bringing these materials to school for sharing, discussion, and possible display. For example, Schwartz (2000) described assigning students to develop reports of noteworthy events in their families' histories, such as stories about when and how their parents met or the events of the day that the child was born. As another example, Hickey (1999) described a "different sides of the story" unit that uses family history to develop critical thinking skills. Students interview their family members to elicit their individual perspectives on a commonly experienced event (e.g., a tornado, election, or landmark event within the family). Then they compare the different perspectives and try to learn the "true facts." This leads to discussion of what ends up in press accounts, history books, and so forth—the process of how history is made.

Using Children's Literature to Teach History

Most history learning is embedded within the context of storylines developed by the teacher, usually with the assistance of a textbook. However, it often is more useful to enrich these storylines using historical source material or historically based fiction written or adapted for children (e.g., biography or autobiography, fictionalized versions of historical events, diaries, or newspaper articles). These sources usually are interesting to students and provide opportunities to expose them to multiple interpretations and to the views and experiences of women, children, minorities, and others whose voices are often excluded from textbook treatments of history (Causey & Armento, 2001). Well-chosen literature selections can serve at least three significant purposes that advance students' historical understanding: providing a sense of context by relating how some people thought about their world at the time, helping students learn to take the perspective of others, and exposing them to alternate interpretations of events. Although proponents

of infusing literature into history curricula frequently advance these and other claims, it should be noted that the research base on the topic is quite limited and that many potential literature choices are distorted, chauvinistic, or otherwise unsuitable except as negative examples. However, appropriately selected literature used in support of relevant history teaching goals can lead to positive affective and cognitive outcomes (VanSledright & Franks, 1998).

History-based fiction can be helpful in “making history come alive” for elementary students. For example, the book *Sarah Morton’s Day* (Waters, 1989) depicts a day in the life of an English child born in Holland in 1618 who came to Plymouth in 1623. Through engaging narrative and photographs (taken at the reconstructed Plymouth Plantation in Massachusetts), the book chronicles what might have been a typical day in Sarah’s life. Much of it recounts the many chores that Sarah had to complete between dawn and dusk, but it also mentions lessons (in the home), social chat and games with a playmate, and excitement at the sighting of an incoming ship. In the process, the book communicates a great deal about what life was like in this colony, especially for children. It is based on an actual child and family and depicts events that are authentic given what is known about the time and place, although the depicted conversations are fictional. Most fifth graders are quite taken with the story, and especially with its details about the life of children in the colony, such as the notion that Sarah had to do chores almost all day and had to stand while eating meals even though her parents were seated.

Comparisons of children’s trade books with social studies textbooks indicate that the trade books have a great deal to offer as substitute or supplementary sources of curricular content. Historical trade books’ emphasis on human motives, solving problems, and the consequences of actions compares favorably with the emphasis on facts, names, and dates in the textbooks, and the trade books’ emphasis on ordinary people, the human aspects of famous people, and the effects of world or national events on the lives of common people compares favorably with the textbooks’ emphasis on world leaders, famous people, and big events (Tomlinson, Tunnell, & Richgels, 1993).

Textbooks feature almost exclusively expository writing, but historical fiction features narrative writing; trade books feature longer and more complex sentences that nevertheless are easier to understand because they offer deeper elaboration of a smaller subset of topics and more cohesion across sentences and paragraphs than the textbooks do; the trade books are unrestricted by readability formulas, so they offer richer vocabularies, more varied styles, and more descriptive and elaborated language; in contrast to the use of past tense verbs that lend a sense of distance and unreality to the events portrayed and make the people seem lifeless, trade books present the people and events as living and use present-tense verbs and dialogue that lend a sense of immediacy and reality; and trade books emphasize human stories well told that make for greater interest, reader involvement, and memorability (Richgels, Tomlinson, & Tunnell, 1993). However, you will need to exercise care in selecting historically based trade books meant for children because many of them offer romanticized rather than realistic portrayals of historical figures and events, feature chauvinistic or otherwise biased interpretations, or reflect other problems in content selection or representation that undermine their value as historical content sources (Tunnell, 1993).

Children need help in keeping fictional sources in perspective so that they do not confuse the real with the fictional (like the student who named Johnny Tremain as a leader of the American Revolution) or generalize from the specific (like the students who developed the notion that life for all children in all of the colonies was like Sarah Morton’s life among the Puritans at Plymouth Plantation). These examples illustrate how the potential motivational and insight benefits that might be derived from using fictional sources must be balanced against their potential for inducing distorted learning. Some

distortions are inevitable, and most will be cleared up without great difficulty. Still, you should minimize such problems by screening historical fiction sources for authenticity and by helping your students understand the differences between fictional and historical representations (Levstik, 1989; VanSledright, 2002).

What children's literature have you read that would work to teach historical content? How will you evaluate whether a book is worth using?

Using Timelines

Timelines are useful devices for helping students learn and remember landmark events in history. We recommend that at least one timeline be kept on permanent display in your classroom. You may be able to purchase commercially produced timelines suitable for use with your students, but if you teach in the primary grades, you might do better to develop your own timelines, preferably in collaboration with your students. We have seen the value of these “interactive” timelines in observing Barbara Knighton teach her elementary students.

Barbara introduces her students to timelines by creating a timeline of her own life. She brings to class a collection of artifacts (e.g., trophies and keepsakes from childhood and graduation and wedding photos), sequenced by age. Then she displays each of these artifacts (and adds simple drawings made quickly on the spot) during a lesson that highlights her life to date. Subsequently she affixes these illustrations to a timeline that extends for several feet and is posted on a wall. As a follow-up, she assigns her students to develop their own personal timelines, working in collaboration with family members. At this point, they clearly understand that a timeline depicts significant events in the order in which they occurred.

Subsequently, when teaching the historical strands of her social studies units on cultural universals, Barbara develops additional timelines depicting key advances in each of these aspects of the human condition. Her timeline for the transportation unit, for example, depicts people walking and carrying or dragging items in the Long, Long Ago (cave days) section; people riding horses, carrying items in horse-drawn wagons, or using canoes or sailboats in the Long Ago (pioneer days) section; and trains, cars, trucks, and airplanes in the Modern Times section. Barbara's homemade timelines are not drawn to scale and do not usually include specific dates, but they are well suited to the content taught at the grade level. Furthermore, they are used as teaching and learning resources, not just displayed as decorations. Each artifact or drawing is used to illustrate a big idea emphasized in teaching about historical developments, and the completed timeline serves as a resource to which Barbara can refer in her subsequent teaching and her students can refer as they work on assignments.

Another variation on the timeline is to combine a personal timeline with a timeline of significant events to situate one's personal history in the grander historical narrative. For example students could determine what significant events were happening when their parents were born. We do not believe that students' memorization of the years of significant events is as important as their understanding of the general chronology of when these events occurred and their knowledge of their personal histories in the context of larger historical narratives. See the following website for teaching ideas: teachinghistory.org/teaching-materials/teaching-guides/24347

Teaching With Artifacts and Historical Source Material

Today's teachers have access to a wonderful range of artifacts and documents that can enrich their students' history learning. Materials packets, CD ROMs, and software collections of primary sources are available for purchase. Many historical societies, archival collections, and museums have digitized their collections and made them available through the Internet, often with plans for documents-based lessons (Causey & Armento, 2001). In addition, the November/December, 2003 issue of *Social Education* (Volume 67, No. 7) was devoted entirely to teaching history with primary sources. Its articles contain guidance on finding and evaluating such sources and planning lessons around them. The sources range from old objects found in the home to gravestones in local cemeteries to reproductions of our national documents accessed via the Internet.

Teaching ideas and even full-fledged lesson plans can be found on Internet sites devoted to history or social studies teaching (e.g., teachinghistory.org) and in the journals *Social Education*, *Social Studies and the Young Learner*, and *The Social Studies*. For example, Barton (2001) offered guidelines for scaffolding elementary students' analyses of historical photographs. Using as examples several photos of food stores, restaurants, and gas stations taken in the 1940s, Barton explained the value of posing questions about the pictures (e.g., In what year might they have been taken? At what time of day? What are the people doing?), eliciting responses and supportive reasoning and then discussing the diverse opinions expressed to see if agreement might be reached. If the students have difficulty at first, the teacher can model some pertinent opinions and supportive observations, then cue students' observations by asking questions such as "What do you think stores were like then?" or "Do you think advertising was important then?"

As another example, Wyman (1998) described activities built around excerpts from diaries written by children and adolescents whose families were migrating west along the Oregon Trail in the middle of the nineteenth century. The excerpts communicate the sights, sounds, and feelings experienced by these young people as they traveled westward. Wyman suggested three ways in which they can be incorporated into useful learning activities: identifying and discussing unexpected content; identifying and discussing the implications of recurring events such as accidents, lost children, and contact with Indians; and having students imagine that their families were traveling westward along the Oregon Trail and creating their own imaginary diaries.

Sometimes a historical resource is not well suited to whole-class lessons but is useful as a focal point for activities in learning centers. Haas (2000) described such a use for *A Street through Time* (Millard, 1998), a richly illustrated children's book that offers "a 12,000-year walk through history." The book shows how a single place (a riverside street in Europe) changed through the centuries in response to innovations in culture and technology. Each illustration depicts the everyday activities of people of a variety of ages and occupations. Close study of each individual illustration reveals a great deal of information about life during the century it portrays, and comparisons across illustrations develop appreciation for changes over time. Haas explained how individuals, pairs, or small groups of students can study and discuss these illustrations, guided by questions calling for them to note the clothing, activities, or artifacts being used by different people for different purposes, the similarities and differences between consecutive illustrations, and so on.

Along with the sources cited previously, you may wish to consult the following for more ideas about teaching history to elementary students. First, you may wish to subscribe to or inspect issues of *Cobblestone: A History Magazine for Young People*. Designed for

grades 4 to 9, *Cobblestone* publishes 50-page issues devoted to a particular theme (person, event, period, or place) in American history. Each theme is addressed through nonfiction articles, historical fiction, poetry and biography, and includes video and book bibliographies. The same company also produces *Appleseeds*, a social studies-based magazine for grades 3 to 5, and *Footsteps*, a magazine celebrating the heritage and contributions of African-Americans. (Although *Footsteps*' last issue was May 2006, past issues are available.) In each of these publications, the textual material is accompanied by good illustrations as well as puzzles, games, songs, cartoons, and other material related to the theme. You may want to adapt some of this material for use with your students in learning centers.

For information about historical trade books and other text supplements for use in teaching history to elementary students, see Brandhorst (1988); California State Department of Education (1991); James and Zarrillo (1989); Lawson and Barnes (1991); and Symcox (1991). Other recommended resources include the Levstik and Barton (2005) book on inquiry approaches to history teaching of elementary students, the McCall and Ristow (2003) book on teaching state history with a multicultural emphasis, and the Winston (1997) book on using family stories to address both social studies and literature goals with young students. For information about using computers and associated technology for teaching history, see Parham (1994), Schlene (1990), and Seiter (1988). Finally, for information about the History Teaching Alliance that offers training and resources for history teaching, see Beninati (1991).

Some textbooks include primary source materials. For example, Joy Hakim's series, *A History of US*, features letters, diary entries, photographs, drawings, maps, and excerpts from significant historical documents in addition to her secondary source materials providing an historical interpretation of the events of the past (Hakim, 2002). She invites students to draw their own interpretations of the primary source materials. See www.joyhakim.com/ for information on the series.

Technology Tips

The Virtual History Museum (VHM) project is a web-based history-learning site that integrates literacy and history through technology. The site allows teachers or students to design exhibits on a historical topic. It is intended to help all learners, and it includes supports for students with disabilities. See vhm.msu.edu/ for more information on the project.

Document-Based Questions

One form of assessment that relies upon primary source material is document-based questions (DBQs), which are used at the high school level on Advanced Placement examinations and in the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme. However, they can be adapted for use with upper elementary and middle school students as well. DBQs involve a set of primary source documents (e.g., letters, newspaper articles, maps, images, and political cartoons) that are labeled. Students then analyze the documents individually (determining each document's message, audience, and credibility) and collectively to answer questions about the historical event represented by the sources. For example, a DBQ on the life of Harriet Tubman might include a timeline of her life, a photograph of her, maps of the Underground Railroad routes, a list of her rescue missions, and a transcript of an interview with Harriet Tubman. See www.dbqproject.com/ for background information and resources for designing DBQs.

Technology Tips

Technology has greatly improved access to primary source materials. Websites for museums and historical sites feature digital images of primary source materials, and recordings of historical speeches and songs are also available on the Internet. Short videos that incorporate primary and secondary source materials are widely available. Discovery Education is one site that offers a variety of free materials as well as subscription access to short videos on its United Streaming page. Whatever the historical topic you are teaching, there are bound to be immediately accessible primary sources to share with your students.

Summary

Organizations and scholars concerned with history teaching have developed useful guidelines that can help you teach history in ways that promote progress toward social understanding and civic efficacy goals. Along with more detailed and subject-specific advice, these sources emphasize the value of the following:

1. Replacing parades of facts with coherent networks of knowledge structured around powerful ideas.
2. Studying people within the context of their time and place, so as to develop empathy and avoid presentism or chauvinism.
3. Focusing on causal explanations that will help students understand not only what happened, but why, and what this might mean for personal, social, or civic decision making.

Much of the content of social studies is drawn from its foundational disciplines of history, and the social sciences (e.g., anthropology, economics, geography, political science, psychology, and sociology). However, this content is blended within holistic treatments of unit topics and taught with more emphasis on citizen education goals than on goals specific to the individual disciplines. Keep this distinction in mind as you learn about the pan-disciplinary curriculum standards put forth by the National Council for the Social Studies, as contrasted with the discipline-specific standards put forth by advocates for history and the social sciences.

History is an interpretive discipline focused on particulars rather than a social science focused on developing and testing broadly applicable theories. Historians develop chronologies and explanations of events by assembling all potentially relevant evidence,

assessing sources (primary or secondary) and credibility (well-informed, unbiased), and then constructing an account that best fits the most credible evidence. Even so, historians often disagree, especially when drawing conclusions about causes and effects.

Children in the elementary grades are not yet ready for detailed chronologies or abstract analyses, but they can understand basic historical sequences (such as the changes in farming or transportation brought about through inventions) and narrative accounts of events that focus on the goal-oriented actions of key figures. Most children show a pervasive presentism in their thinking about the past, so it is important to help them develop historical empathy: considering the decisions and actions of people in the past with reference to the knowledge and technologies available to them at their time and place, rather than viewing them only from hindsight.

Children's responsiveness to narrative formats acts as a double-edged sword in history teaching. Narrative formats make it easier to engage children's interest in history and help them learn many aspects of it with understanding, but they prefer clean and simple storylines with clear-cut heroes and villains. Historical events are usually much more complicated than simple stories, and different stakeholder groups often have very different views about whether a particular event was desirable and whether key participants should be viewed positively or negatively. It is important to bring out these multiple perspectives as part of the larger effort to develop students' global and multicultural awareness.

History learning in the elementary grades should begin early with students developing personal timelines and family histories that include narrative and supporting documents and artifacts. Later they can study and

conduct inquiry into historical aspects of the local community. By the time they study state history in fourth grade and U.S. history in fifth grade, they should have acquired dispositions toward historical empathy

and basic understandings about historiography as evidence-based interpretation that is open to multiple perspectives and does not always lead to unambiguous conclusions.



TeachSource Video Case

Visit the Education Media library to view the TeachSource Video Case **Benefits of a Multicultural History Curriculum**. As you watch, consider the following questions: What does multiculturalism look like in practice? Why is studying historical accounts from multiple perspectives important? How will you teach about Christopher Columbus?

Reflective Questions

1. How would you respond to individuals who believe that the teaching of big ideas associated with history should relate to the development of students' life roles in work, family, leisure, and as a citizen? Provide examples to support your response.
2. Often classroom teachers introduce students to timelines by using the ones in their textbooks. What is your opinion of this?
3. What do you view as the historical priorities appropriate for your grade level and how might you teach them more meaningfully?
4. What do you view as the benefits of incorporating more big ideas associated with history in your current social studies curriculum?
5. Some educators believe that history is a multicultural study. Do you agree? Why? Why not? If you agree, what does this look like for the novice or practicing teacher?

Your Turn: History in the Intermediate Grades

If the focus of social studies at your grade level is history, we suggest that you obtain and review the national history guidelines, guidelines available at the state level, and your district's or school's curriculum guide at your grade level. Then carefully examine the textbook if one has been adopted. If you have developed your own units, you will want to revisit these materials too. As you inspect all of these sources and reflect on what you have read in this chapter, use the grid shown in Figure 5.1 to plot specific examples that correspond to the principles for teaching history in your classroom. Once you have iden-

tified weak spots, spend time revising your program to be reflective of the principles. We think this exercise will bring you one step closer to presenting a social studies course in history that is meaningful and usable. Select one of the following options:

After planning a unit using the guiding principles for history teaching outlined in this chapter, share your plans with a "history buff." Elicit that person's reactions regarding the "love" of the subject you hope to impart—as well as the "meaningfulness" that you hope will result.

FIGURE 5.1 Specific Examples to Illustrate Teaching History

Principles for Teaching History	Unit 1	Unit 2	Unit 3	Unit 4
Develop and present networks of knowledge structured around powerful ideas.				
Instruction should focus on the study of particular individuals and groups of people rather than on impersonal abstractions.				
Expose students to varied data sources and provide them with opportunities to conduct historical inquiry, to synthesize and communicate their findings, to learn from biography, fiction, and texts, and so forth.				
Bring history to life for students.				
Foster empathy with the people being studied.				
Focus on causal explanations that help students understand what happened, why, and what it might mean for personal, social, or civic decision making.				

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OR

After teaching a unit using the guiding principles established in this chapter, interview students to

determine their reactions regarding meaningfulness and enjoyment.

Sample Interview Questions

Select questions that match your unit's goals and major historical understandings.

1. What were the big ideas you learned about the history of our (state/region/nation)?
2. Would you have liked to have been one of the early settlers to come to our area? Why? Why not? What do you think life was like for them?
3. What groups of people do you think were the most influential in the development of our (state/region/nation)? Why?
4. If you could meet one historical figure who contributed to the development of our (state/region/nation),

who would it be? Why? Describe how you would choose to spend a day with this person.

5. Have a range of data sources available that you used during the unit. Ask students to select those that were most inspiring, enjoyable, and meaningful, and explain why.
6. If you could live during the early development of our region or now, which would you choose and why?
7. How do you think learning about the past can help you today? In the future? (These questions could be discussed in focus groups and tape recorded for later analysis and reflection.)

Your Turn: A Resource Unit for Fifth-Grade U.S. History: The American Revolution (Appendix B)

The nature of the content and the students' lack of much background knowledge limit opportunities for experiential or independent inquiry, but the American Revolution provides a very fruitful forum for structured discourse. Also, writing can be a natural outgrowth of the discussions as well as a contributor to subsequent dialogues. Keeping this in mind, we recommend that you expand this resource unit (see Appendix B) into a teaching unit using discourse and writing as the key modalities. The writing pieces can serve as major entries for the

student portfolio, a very appropriate authentic assessment measure given the nature of the goals, content, and strategies for developing meaningfulness. The net result should be powerful social studies teaching and learning.

Figure 5.2 is a "worksheet" to help guide your planning of structured discourse. Select questions that focus on your goals and address the key understandings. Early in the discussion you will want to assess prior knowledge and determine apparent misconceptions. However, do not allow students to "wallow in

FIGURE 5.2 The American Revolution

Goal 1	Major Understanding	Content Source	Engaging Students in Reflective Discourse
To enhance students' understanding and appreciation of the circumstances that transpired between 1620 and 1776, setting the stage for the Declaration of Independence.	During the 15 years between the founding of the first English colonies and the Declaration of Independence, ties with England gradually weakened.	Textbook account and/or story with pictures presented by the teacher focusing on the conditions, issues, chain of events, and so on.	<p>Review the end-of-chapter material in Chapter 8. Incorporate each of the types of questions into this plan for structured discourse.</p> <p>Possible Questions</p> <p>What did you know about the time period from 1620 to 1776 prior to reading about it or hearing the “story” presented by the teacher?</p> <p>What did you know about the English?</p> <p>Do you remember hearing anything about England—its people? Leadership? If so, explain.</p> <p>What did the American Revolution make you think of when you heard of it for the first time?</p> <p>If you were a colonist, how do you think you would feel about what was happening?</p> <p>Who was right? Wrong? Why do you think so? Do you think there were circumstances beyond either group’s control?</p> <p>Do you think there was any single event or issue that really broke wide open the conflict between the two groups? Explain.</p> <p>If you had lived during this time period, who would you like to have known? Would you have tried to influence that person’s reactions regarding the conflict? If so, how? If not, why not?</p> <p>How do you think the Declaration of Independence addressed the problem between the two groups? Was it necessary? Why? Why not? How else might the differences between England and the colonists have been handled?</p>

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ignorance” for too long. Textbook accounts, supplemental materials such as children’s literature and information available on CD-ROMs as well as audio and video commentary are among the content sources that can be used as vehicles for launching fruitful discussions with focus, boundaries, and interaction.

Portfolio Suggestions for the American Revolution Unit

The potential portfolio contents for social studies are limitless, but those selected for emphasis should typify the powerful teaching and learning experiences

that the students have had during the unit. Portfolio contents should be indicative of their continuous development. The portfolio should serve as a powerful stimulus for students to use as they articulate

major understandings about the American Revolution and evaluate their own work.

We have included sample writing entries that reflect Goal #1 identified on our “worksheet” in Figure 5.3.

FIGURE 5.3 Portfolio Worksheet

Goal 1	Suggested Possible Portfolio Entries
To enhance students’ understanding and appreciation of the circumstances that transpired between 1620 and 1776, setting the stage for the Declaration of Independence.	Pre-unit—What does the American Revolution mean to you?
	Post-unit—Repeat entry, drawing on what has been learned. What does the American Revolution mean to you?
	Imagine that you lived in England throughout the 150-year time period (between 1620 and 1776). Explain what life was like.
	OR
	Imagine that you lived in America during that same time period. Explain what life was like.
	OR
	Adopt the role of the King of England during this time period. Explain the situation from your perspective.
	OR
	Imagine you are a colonist. Write a letter to a relative in England explaining what your life in America was like in the mid-1700s.
	OR
	Imagine you are a journalist. Explain the trade-offs that occurred because the colonists were considered British subjects.
	(Encourage students to share their entries with their peers. If they wish to illustrate their writing, suggest they do it at home or when they have completed all of their assignments.)

Student-led conferences using the portfolio entries as springboards could serve as nice culmination activities for the learning. If structured properly, such conferences will provide powerful learning opportunities

for students, especially with regard to key understandings about the American Revolution that they probably would not develop by studying disconnected facts to prepare for a conventional test.

HOW CAN I TEACH GEOGRAPHY AND ANTHROPOLOGY POWERFULLY?

Carolyn Hart, Intern

Entering into my senior year education classes, I was excited, yet slightly apprehensive. When I was in elementary school, my social studies classes all essentially were the same: A teacher would pull down her map at the front of the class, and instruct us to open to page 126 in our textbooks and begin reading. After the reading came the four to six questions in the back, your answers to which would give the teacher confidence that you may have actually learned something. But my class and I all knew the same thing: we would most likely forget the answers to those questions about ten minutes after turning them in.

So, here I was, an eager, yet skeptical aspiring teacher, waiting to hear something that would appease my concerns about teaching such a “dry” subject (which I thought it was, at this point). What I was greeted with was my professor’s claim that “social studies is everywhere,” and this textbook would reveal this. Throughout the semester, I began to discover things: for example, a heavy reliance on a social studies textbook is not only boring, it’s also fairly irresponsible. In a subject so rooted in daily life as well as discovery, limiting it to the confines of a few textbook pages does the subject a complete disservice.

Geography and anthropology—the study of places and the study of human life—are so obviously intertwined into essentially everything we do. Living our daily lives, discovering new cultures, and experiencing different parts of the world are exactly what geography and anthropology are about—not memorizing facts in

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a textbook in order to pass a test. Looking at social studies through this lens can help elementary school teachers avoid the monotony of textbook reading, and can bring social studies to life for their young students. Instead of simply pointing out a place on a map, why not bring actual artifacts from different locations and cultures to show your students? Being able to give them a little glimpse of what our world has to offer will promote intrinsic interest in the subject—plus, it is way more fun! And as Brophy, Alleman, and Halvorsen have pointed out in this chapter, since there is no formal anthropological curriculum, being able to intertwine anthropology into your geography will make both subjects pop out—if my own travels have taught me anything, it is that every place is rich in culture. In short, make these subjects come alive!

Needless to say, my concerns with being the next boring social studies teacher are beginning to vanish. Being able to change my thinking about social studies has absolutely given me a deep appreciation for the subject. Now, I cannot wait to pass on the “social studies is all around us—it helps us understand how the world works” mentality to my young students. I mean, what a great motivational tool! The next time my students say to me, “Hey, we went to the beach yesterday!”, I can’t wait to let them know that they just experienced geography (by going to a new location), sociology and anthropology (by people watching), and economics (if they paid to enter) just by soaking up the sun with their friends and family!

Having addressed history teaching in Chapter 5, we shift attention in this chapter to teaching content drawn from geography and anthropology. We have grouped these two disciplines within Chapter 6 because they share an interest in culture, which is one of the most frequently taught concepts in all of social studies. The remaining social sciences are addressed in Chapter 7.



Coherent Content

Principle 5: Coherent Content: To facilitate meaningful learning and retention, content is explained clearly and developed with emphasis on its structure and connections.

Coherent content refers to content whose knowledge and skills are connected to each other, whereby the sequence of ideas or events makes sense and the relationships are apparent. Coherent content is facilitated through the use of powerful ideas as an organizational tool. Please see Chapter 14 for a more in-depth description of this principle.

Geography

Geography is the study of people, places, and environments from a spatial and ecological perspective. The *spatial aspect* refers to where different places in the world are located,

both precisely (at a particular intersection of latitude and longitude, within a particular nation and region) and relative to one another (in terms of direction and distance), as well as the patterns of distribution of human activities occurring at different places (land use, settlement, industry, and other economic activities). The *ecological aspect* looks at characteristics of the physical environment, such as climate, landforms, and vegetation, which provide affordances and constraints for human habitation and in turn are affected by human activities (Geography Education Standards Project, 1994).

Geography is a broad field that is not easily classified. If viewed as a science, it can be seen as *partly a natural science* (e.g., the study and mapping of land forms, weather patterns and natural resources) and *partly a social science* (the study of the ways that people adapt to and change their physical environments). Viewed as a *field of study*, geography is not so much a subject as a point of view that draws on and integrates other subjects (Knight, 1993). Viewed as a *discipline*, it is whatever geographers do, which subsumes quite a range of activities and fields of knowledge (Demko, 1992; Marshall, 1991).

What geographers have in common is the *spatial point of view* that they bring to bear on the topics they study. However, as Knight (1993, p. 48) noted, "Geography is necessarily concerned with location, much as history is necessarily concerned with time." Libbee and Stoltman (1988) compared historians and geographers. They noted that *historians* approach issues or events as developments in *time* and ask what happened, why it happened at that time, what preceded and perhaps caused it, what else was happening at the same time, and what the consequences were for the future. In contrast, *geographers* approach the issues or events as developments in *space* and focus on where the event happened, why it happened where it did, how things at that place and perhaps at other places helped to cause it, and what the consequences were for the place and for other places. Both historians and geographers seek to understand and explain why phenomena occur, not just to locate them on timelines or maps.

Geography in the Elementary Grades

Geography pervades the elementary social studies curriculum. Texts for each grade typically include a unit on map and globe studies, placed at the beginnings or ends of the books. These units focus on building basic knowledge and skills and are not integrated with the content of the other chapters. If this is the case consider using the local setting as the context and point of departure. Subsequent units need to apply these skills and knowledge. The characteristics of places influence local human activities related to food, clothing, shelter, transportation, and most of the other cultural universals, so instruction on these topics in the primary grades should include significant geographic strands (e.g., looking at how and why different places in the world feature contrasting crops and food consumption patterns, types of homes constructed, and so on). Studies of communities, states, nations, and regions that occur in the middle grades are by nature studies of places, so units on these topics should include use of maps and globes as well as the study of ways in which the local geography provides affordances and constraints to human activities. Finally, historical studies should include geographical elements, routinely to note the locations at which significant events occurred, and frequently to identify geographical factors that help explain why the events developed as they did. (For example, the major reason why slavery proliferated in the Southern states was that cotton developed as a major crop in this region, and harvesting cotton was a labor-intensive industry that required a great many field hands; a major reason why the Americans won the Revolutionary War was that England had to ship soldiers across the Atlantic Ocean to fight on unfamiliar territory, whereas the Americans were locals operating on familiar territory with much more local support.)

Developments in Geographic Knowledge

Research on children's geographic knowledge indicates that it accumulates gradually across the elementary years. Preschool and early elementary children tend to identify with their own country and to be aware of at least some other countries, although they usually do not possess much specific knowledge unless they have traveled abroad. Their beliefs combine accurate information with stereotypes and misconceptions. This is especially true of their ideas about Africa, which tend to emphasize images of jungles, wild animals, witch doctors, and people starving, living in huts, and living primitive lives generally (Palmer, 1994; Wiegand, 1993).

Primary-grade children have difficulty understanding nested geographical relationships (e.g., local community within the state, within the region, within the nation, and within the hemisphere). However, they can learn these relationships through exposure to map-based instruction, and there is some evidence that their understandings have improved in recent decades (Harwood & McShane, 1996).

Primary-grade children's knowledge about their own country is mostly vague and symbolic, and their knowledge about other countries is even more vague and often riddled with stereotypes or misconceptions. American children typically develop positive attitudes toward their country, say that they are happy to live in it, and select positive adjectives as descriptive of it. These tendencies are less pronounced among minority group members and are not always observed among children from other countries. (Much depends on the country's history and the kinds of messages about it to which children are exposed.)

These early positive attitudes toward the home country are not necessarily accompanied by negative attitudes toward other countries, but as children begin and progress through elementary school, many acquire at least temporary negative stereotypes of particular nations or world regions. As they learn more, they come to appreciate that there are both positives and negatives about any nation (Barrett, 2005).

Our own research (Brophy & Alleman, 2005) identified several generic characteristics of K-3 students' thinking that mediate their understandings of geographical information. First, the children tended to focus on individuals, families, and local settings. They rarely made reference to effects of events on the nation, let alone the world or the human condition at large. For example, when asked about how the invention of printing changed the world, most of them said that the people who made books no longer had to copy them by hand or that the people who read them found them easier to read, rather than saying that printing made it possible to make multiple copies of books much more quickly, so that many more people would have access to them.

Second, although they were familiar with human actions relating to cultural universals that they could observe in their homes and neighborhoods, they usually knew little or nothing about how and why these practices vary across locations and cultures. Few children have much knowledge about the affordances and constraints that local geography provides even to people living in their region until they develop basic knowledge of the range of local geographies in the world and the trade-offs they embody.

Third, their thinking reflected a child's rather than an adult's purview. In talking about the location of their ideal home, for example, they seldom mentioned convenience to good schools or to the parents' job sites (instead emphasizing convenience to parks and restaurants). When asked about why most settlements were located initially around rivers or bodies of water and later around rail lines, they talked about people wanting to go swimming or take a ride, but not about transportation connecting the settlement to other communities and facilitating the exchange of resources and products. When asked why the Chinese eat more chicken and rice and Americans eat more beef and bread,

most talked about cultural differences in preferences (e.g., the Chinese like rice but Americans like bread), not about geography-based differences in patterns of crop planting and animal raising.

In general, the children showed limited awareness of environmental affordances and constraints that help explain contrasting cultural and economic practices as well as little awareness of the land-to-hand progressions involved in processing natural products or creating manufactured ones. When asked how developments in communication and transportation had “shrunk the world,” most failed to grasp the metaphor and were unable to respond. Although their answers to geographic questions (when they were able to generate answers) reflected limited geographic exposure and a child’s purview, most were valid as far as they went. However, some children did communicate clear misconceptions, such as the idea that rivers flow inland from the oceans or that highways are literally high (elevated above the surrounding land).

Some geographical misunderstandings are easily corrected because they are rooted in word ambiguities (the term “country” can refer either to a nation or to a rural area) or in generalizations of associations or stereotypes (assuming that polar bears live in Antarctica, that penguins live at the North Pole, or that everyone who lives in or near a jungle pursues a hunter-gatherer lifestyle) (Scoffham, 1998, 2000). Other confusions may take longer to overcome because they require more complicated explanations (e.g., downflow of fresh water from higher elevations creates rivers that eventually reach sea level and flow into the salt water oceans) or because they involve abstractions that are difficult for children to remember (e.g., cities are located within states which are located within the nation), or require specific coordinates (e.g., map symbols, scale, directional coordinates).

Problems with Geography Texts and Teaching

Opportunities for developing geographical understandings are not used effectively in most elementary classrooms. Research on elementary geography textbooks and teaching typically reveals an emphasis on miscellaneous and often trivial facts rather than on understanding and using powerful geographical knowledge. Textbooks typically stress the physical aspects of geography over its human aspects and feature parades of facts presented without sufficient attention to connections, explanations, or critical thinking (Beck, McKeown, & Gromoll, 1989; Brophy, 1992; Haas, 1991). Similarly, studies involving interviewing teachers and observing in classrooms indicate that teachers’ planning, instruction, and assignments relating to geography focus on map work and factual details (e.g., capital cities, major exports) without much emphasis on understanding why places are where they are and have the characteristics that they do (Farrell & Cirrincione, 1989; Muessig, 1987; Stoltman, 1991; Thornton & Wenger, 1990; Winston, 1986).

A major reason for this lack of attention to powerful ideas is that teachers usually possess only limited knowledge of geographical information and of geography as a discipline, which is not surprising given their limited and somewhat distorted exposure to the subject as students. Along with confusion about the nature of geography and about what aspects of it to teach, other problems include instruction in incorrect or out-of-date facts or concepts (such as an oversimplified environmental determinism as an explanation for human behavior in a particular place), a need to balance an emphasis on regions with a global perspective stressing our interdependent world, and tendencies toward ethnocentrism or stereotyping in treatments of other cultures.

Geography was strongly represented as a discipline taught on its own in late nineteenth and early twentieth century curricula, but it gradually became subsumed into the broader field of social studies in the mid-twentieth century. However, geography has been making a comeback lately, in response to poor performance by American students

on national assessments, concerns about developing a shared cultural literacy, and increasing recognition that Americans need to become better informed about the rest of the world in order to understand global, economic and political issues (Gregg & Leinhardt, 1994; Haas, 2001). Geographical content is well worth emphasizing for these and other reasons (e.g., developing empathy, minimizing chauvinism, and helping students begin to understand and appreciate the reasons for variation in economies and cultures). However, this potential will not be realized unless geography instruction shifts from confronting students with endless parades of facts to teaching them to think about the world the way geographers do and to ferret out and apply big ideas. Examples of powerful ideas should be an integral part of the curriculum and instruction. They include the idea that humans and the environment interact; the physical environment influences human activity and humans influence and change the environment; successive or continuing occupancy by groups of people and natural processes go together to make their individual distinctiveness; more changes occur near the boundaries of regions than the interiors of regions, and so forth.

Lash and Wridt (2002) claim that the current research on geographic education seems to ignore the fact that geography matters. The content does not situate the learning process within a particular social, cultural, or physical context. Furthermore, it tends to ignore the connections among home, community, and the larger social contexts. We suggest that the human side needs to be added showing how geographic content and skills are a part of students' lives as well as the lives of their parents. This addition serves as the motivational factor—and why the students should care about geography.

The Five Fundamental Themes

Professional associations have cooperated to help teachers understand geography as a discipline and to suggest powerful ideas to emphasize when teaching it. The first major step was publication of the *Guidelines for Geographic Education: Elementary and Secondary Schools* (Joint Committee on Geographic Education, 1984). These guidelines provide a clear content and skills framework for K–12 geography that is structured around the five fundamental themes outlined below (Petersen, Natoli, & Boehm, 1994). They include a scope and sequence for Grades K–6 that outlines concepts and learning outcomes for each grade level.

The sponsoring organizations later created the Geographic Education National Implementation Project (GENIP) to advance the spirit of the guidelines by developing teaching materials, reviewing teacher certification standards, sponsoring workshops for teachers, and advising groups who prepare diagnostic and competency tests in geography. GENIP's work has included publication of a key document for elementary teachers: *K–6 geography: Themes, Key Ideas, and Learning Outcomes* (GENIP, 1987) and a book on how teachers can connect their theme-based geography teaching to the social understanding and civic efficacy goals of social studies (Stoltman, 1990).

The efforts of GENIP have been assisted by the National Geographic Society, which established its Geography Education Program to develop statewide alliances for geographic education in each state. These alliances are partnerships between teachers and university geographers. They circulate materials and sponsor summer workshops and other geographic education programs for teachers. You can contact your state's geographic alliance for information and resources to help you with your geography teaching. The National Geographic Society also has produced a map of the United States that demonstrates the five fundamental themes (GENIP/NGS, 1986) and circulated a teacher's handbook based on the themes (Ludwig et al., 1991).

Finally, Boehm and Petersen (1994) developed an elaboration of the five fundamental themes based on experience in using them with teachers. They noted that the themes

provide a convenient and adaptable format for organizing geographical content and avoiding the practice of teaching geography through rote memorization. The five themes are as follows.

1. Location: Position on the earth's surface. Absolute and relative location are two ways of describing the positions of people and places. Location is the most basic of the fundamental themes. Every geographic feature has a unique location or global address, both in absolute terms and in reference to other locations.

Absolute location. We can identify locations as precise points on the earth's surface using reference grid systems, such as the system of latitude and longitude. Maps of smaller segments of the earth (such as cities or states) often use alpha-numeric grids. Different types of maps show locations of population centers, climate zones, political entities, or topographic features. Projections are needed to transfer information from a spherical earth to a two-dimensional map. This process often leads to distortions in distance (size), direction, or shape. The grids used in location systems allow us to measure distances.

Relative location. The accessibility, the relative location, and the political character of a place influence the quantity and type of interactions of other places. Relative location is a way of expressing a location in relation to another site (e.g., Peoria is 125 miles southwest of Chicago, and Australia is in the southern hemisphere). Both absolute and relative locations have geographical explanations (e.g., of why places are located where they are or why they have certain economic or social characteristics). Over time, certain aspects of relative location may change even though absolute location does not. (For example, as transportation routes in North America shifted from inland waterways to railroads to highways, cities at various locations saw shifts in their relative importance in the transportation system and in the nature of their links to other cities.)

2. Place: Physical and human characteristics. The location of a place in relation to other places helps explain the pattern of development. Location tells us where, and place tells us what is there (in particular, what makes the place special). All places have distinctive characteristics that give them meaning and character and distinguish them from other places.

Physical characteristics. These include the place's land forms (e.g., mountains, plains, natural harbors) and the processes that shape them, its climate (reasons for it and implications for human and animal life), its soils, its vegetation and animal life, and the nature and distribution of its fresh water sources. These physical characteristics are studied with emphasis on how they affect one another and support or challenge human occupation of the place.

Human characteristics. These include the racial and ethnic characteristics of the people who live in the place, their settlement patterns and population factors, and their religions, languages, economic activities, and other cultural characteristics. Also included are the perceived characteristics of places, which may vary across individuals or time periods. (Central America might be viewed as a place of political turmoil, an attractive vacation site, or an interesting blend of Hispanic and Indian cultures.)

3. Human-environmental relations (relationships within places). All environments offer geographical advantages and disadvantages as habitats for humans. For example, high population densities tend to accumulate on flood plains, and low densities in deserts. Yet, some flood plains are periodically subjected to severe damage, and some desert areas, such as those around Tel Aviv or Phoenix, have been modified to support large

population concentrations. People continually modify or adapt to natural settings in ways that reveal their cultural values and economic and political circumstances, such as villages that still endure in the desert southwest. Hispanic and Anglo settlers established mines and mineral industries, cattle ranches, and farms in these deserts, relying on manipulation of water resources. Today, contemporary Americans look to the American Southwest for resort and retirement developments, military training and research, and high technology industries.

Geography focuses on understanding how such human-environment relationships develop and what their consequences are for people and the environment. Sub-themes include the role of technology in modifying environments (with attention to pollution and other costs as well as to benefits), environmental hazards (e.g., earthquakes and floods as well as human-induced disasters), the availability of land and natural resources and the limits this places on human possibilities, the purposes pursued and methods used by people to adapt to environments, and the ethical values and cultural attitudes that affect their behavior.

4. Movement: Humans interacting on the earth (relationships between places). Places and regions are connected by movement. Over time, humans have increased their levels of interaction through communication, travel, and foreign exchange. Technology has shrunk space and distance. People travel out of curiosity, and they migrate because of economic or social need, environmental change, or other reasons. Movement can also be traced in physical forces—traveling weather patterns, ocean and wind currents, flowing water, or plate tectonics.

Several sub-themes surround the reasons for movement and the forms that it takes: transportation modes, everyday travel, historical developments, economic reasons for movements, and mass movements of physical systems. Other sub-themes surround global interdependence: the movement of goods, services and ideas across regional, national, and international borders; the development of trade and common markets. Still other sub-themes surround models of human interaction: the reasons why people move (e.g., from rural areas to cities) and issues relating to the size and spacing of urban areas and the relationships between cities and their surrounding regions.

Tied to the geographic sub-theme movement are *push and pull factors*. Push factors are those factors that drive people to leave their homes. Examples include political and/or religious persecution, scarcity of land or other natural resources in their current location, revolutions, and poverty. Pull factors on the other hand, are conditions that attract people to a new place. Among them are promise of religious and/or political freedom, hope for a new life, availability of resources, industry, and potential job opportunities. People weigh the trade-offs associated with push and pull factors before they make decisions about moving to a new area.

5. Regions: How they form and change. The basic unit of geographic study is the region, an area that displays unity in terms of selected criteria (e.g., types of agriculture, climate, land forms, vegetation, political boundaries, soils, religions, languages, cultures, or economic characteristics). Regions may be larger than a continent or smaller than your neighborhood. They may have well-defined boundaries, such as a state or city, or indistinct boundaries, such as the Great Plains or the Kalahari Desert.

Sub-themes include uniform regions, functional regions, and cultural diversity. Uniform regions are defined by a common cultural or physical characteristic (e.g., the wheat belt, the Bible Belt, and Latin America). Functional regions are organized around a focal point (e.g., the San Francisco Bay area, a local school district). Understanding regions sharpens appreciation of the diversity that exists in human activities and

cultures, and of the ways in which different groups of people interact with one another within regional contexts.

A resource unit on Mountain Regions is included as Appendix C to this book. It serves as an example to illustrate the possibilities of combining the physical and social aspects of geography built around the big ideas from the field. This unit could serve as a springboard for your planning, giving balanced attention to the five fundamental themes.

The National Geography Standards

Along with the five fundamental themes, the guidelines for geographic education identified *five basic geographical skills*: (1) asking geographic questions (Where is it? Why is it there? What is important about its location and how does it relate to other locations?), (2) acquiring geographic information (e.g., from maps and databases), (3) organizing geographic information (e.g., using maps, models, and graphs to display the information in addition to summarizing it in text), (4) analyzing geographic information (e.g., interpreting and drawing conclusions from geographic texts and displays), and (5) answering geographic questions (e.g., acquiring relevant information and using it to draw conclusions or make generalizations).



NCSS Standards Relating to Geography

The National Council for the Social Studies (2010) Curriculum Standards include a theme related to the five fundamental themes, *People, Places, and Environments*. In the early grades, it calls for experiences that allow students to construct and use mental maps of locales, regions, and the world that demonstrate understanding of relative location, direction, size, and shape; interpret, use, and distinguish various representations of the earth, such as maps, globes, and photographs; use appropriate resources, data sources, and geographic tools such as atlases, databases, grid systems, charts, graphs, and maps to generate, manipulate, and interpret information; estimate distance and calculate scale; locate and distinguish among varying landforms and geographic features such as mountains, plateaus, islands, and oceans; describe and speculate about physical system changes, such as seasons, climate and weather, and the water cycle; describe how people create places that reflect ideas, personality, culture, and wants and needs as they design homes, playgrounds, classrooms, and the like; examine the interaction of human beings and their physical environment, the use of land, building of cities, and ecosystem changes in selected locales and regions; explore ways that the earth's physical features have changed over time in the local region and beyond and how these changes may be connected to one another; observe and speculate about social and economic effects of environmental changes and crises resulting from phenomena such as floods, storms, and drought; consider existing uses and propose and evaluate alternative uses of resources and land in home, school, community, the region, and beyond.

For the middle grades, additional activities related to this theme will allow students to create mental maps; create various representations of the earth; use appropriate resources, data sources, and geographic tools such as aerial photographs, satellite images, geographic information systems (GIS), map projections, and cartography to generate, manipulate, and interpret information such as atlases, databases, grid systems, charts, graphs, and maps; estimate distance, calculate scale, and distinguish other geographic relationships such as population density and spatial distribution patterns; locate and describe varying landforms and geographic features, such as mountains, plateaus, islands, rainforests, deserts, and oceans and explain their relationship within the ecosystem; identify geographic patterns associated with physical system changes such as seasons, climate and weather, and the water cycle; describe how people create places that reflect cultural

values and ideals as they build neighborhoods, parks, shopping centers, and the like; examine, interpret and analyze physical and cultural patterns and their interactions, such as land use, settlement patterns, cultural transmission of customs and ideas and ecosystem changes; describe ways that historical events have been influenced by, and have influenced, physical and human geographic factors in local, regional, national, and global settings; propose, compare, and evaluate alternative uses of land and resources in communities, regions, nations, and the world.

A recommended activity that can be done even with kindergarten children is to represent a highway linking two towns (using a strip of paper extending along the classroom floor or just drawing it on the board) and engage students in questions about people's experiences as they drive (eliciting such responses as getting hungry or needing gas). This leads to discussion of businesses that might develop along the highway, and individuals or groups within the class might be appointed to take the roles of a restaurant owner or a gas station owner, for example. Subsequent discussion would focus on where these businesses should be located, their specific nature (e.g., fast food or more upscale restaurants), where these business owners would like to live (near their businesses on the highway or in the towns), where schools or banks are likely to locate, and so on. This activity could be limited to discussion within a single lesson or extended to include construction projects, role play, related writing assignments, and other elaborations that would continue for a week or more. The main point would be to develop students' understandings about the relationships between people's needs and wants and the locations of homes, businesses, and other features of the built environment that enable people to provide for their needs and wants. Other activities include having students develop birds' eye views (i.e., maps) of their bedrooms or other rooms in their homes, the school, or the neighborhood and locating on the globe the place where the ancestors (or in some cases, the immediate families) of the students lived prior to immigrating to America.

Using the Five Themes in Your Teaching

The National Council for Geographic Education makes available at reasonable prices both basic geographical standards and guidelines statements and related publications on standards-based curriculum, instruction, and assessment. Up-to-date information about these publications can be found at the Council's website. Although we find the NCSS theme, *People, Places, and Environments* and National Geography Standards' list of basic skills and standards helpful, we believe that the five fundamental themes will provide the best guidance to teachers as they plan lessons and activities. These themes are very powerful ideas that anchor the geographic perspective on the human condition. They should be brought to bear, not only on explicitly geographic activities, but on activities relating to most of the social studies curriculum.

Consistent emphasis on these five themes helps to ensure that you teach all aspects of geography (not just details of location and place), and in ways that lead students through levels of abstraction from the simple to the complex. Note, however, that the themes are not meant to be used as unit topics and taught one after another. Instead, they are meant to be organizers of the content taught about unit topics such as states, nations, or regions. Good teaching of most geographic topics requires consideration of several, if not all five, of the themes, with attention to their relationships.

In this regard, elementary social studies texts leave much to be desired. Texts for the primary grades tend to emphasize basic geographical concepts and skills, such as the globe, the earth's rotation, daily and seasonal cycles, the cardinal directions, understanding of maps as two-dimensional representations of "bird's eye" views of sections of the earth, and experiences with different kinds of maps. Some of them are quite good at

introducing and scaffolding students' learning of basic map and globe skills. However, these aspects of the program tend to be separated from the students' local environment.

In the intermediate grades, units on places and cultures tend to include maps and descriptions of physical geography, so that they do at least communicate basic information about where places are located and how they support and constrain human habitation. However, the texts usually do not draw on the five themes as much as they should to develop an understanding of why places have the characteristics that they do and why humans have adapted to them in the ways that they have. As the teacher, it will be important for you to help your students to focus on the most important ideas about a place, to see the connections among them, and to begin to ask and acquire answers to the "why" questions that geographers ask about places. We suggest you begin with the most familiar places and link to the less familiar ones. Make sure that when you have students from other places both in the United States and abroad that you include examples from their geographic contexts.

Successful teaching of geographic concepts and principles begins with good planning and preparation. First, stock your classroom with a range of maps and at least one globe, for reference in locating places and movements between places that are featured in the curriculum (not only in social studies, but frequently in science, reading, or writing activities). Maps and globes vary in level of detail, beginning with simple, often schematic, versions that show and label only the continents and oceans and progressing to the most detailed versions that include information on national boundaries, major cities, rivers, mountains, and latitude and longitude lines. Simple, uncluttered versions are ideal for the introductory map and globe lessons taught in the primary grades.

More generally, there usually is an optimal level of complexity to any maps and globes that will be used for particular purposes at particular grade levels. For example, to locate England in a lesson on colonial America or to locate Afghanistan in a current events lesson, a somewhat simplified map or globe that used color coding to differentiate bordering nations would be preferable to a map or globe in which the color coding reflected elevations above sea level and national boundaries because they were indistinct lines crisscrossed by many other lines representing rivers and such.

Simplified maps have been constructed to emphasize many geographical features besides political boundaries, such as distribution patterns for annual rainfall, production of various crops or manufactured items, or languages and religions. These resources are preferable to more familiar political maps for teaching about many geographical topics. The major map companies produce very good sets of maps for use in social studies teaching. Also, the Internet is an increasingly rich source for such specialized resources.

Choropleth maps are thematic maps, also known as color-by-density maps, that provide an easy-to-read visual of how a measurement (of population, for example) varies across a geographic region. These maps can be used to analyze features of regions (e.g., political orientation, race, and religion). Children can make their own choropleth maps quite easily using grids of a defined region (such as the playground or the classroom). Examples of how to do this are shown on various lesson plan websites.

Another aspect of preparation for good geography teaching is thoughtful previewing of the curriculum as a whole (not just social studies) to identify lessons that feature particular places and thus offer opportunities for infusing geographical understandings. This might include locating these places on a map or globe and emphasizing some of their salient geographic features, especially those most relevant to the topic of the lesson. For example, to build background knowledge for appreciating a story about an Inuit family living in a remote area of Alaska, you might present or elicit key information about the far northern location, the very cold climate, the need to depend on hunting and fishing for food, and so on. Also, familiarize yourself with the map and globe concepts and

learning activities suggested for use at your grade level. Rather than wall these off from the rest of the curriculum by teaching them in isolated skills exercises, you might find places where at least some of them could be attached to lessons that would provide authentic opportunities for using the skills being developed.

Frequent reference to maps and globes in the context of the five fundamental themes of geography will help children construct a network of basic generalizations to anchor their understandings of the social world. They should understand, for example, that the climate becomes cooler and eventually colder as one moves away from the equator toward the poles or upward from sea level toward mountain tops; that shipping and fishing are important industries in coastal and island communities; that farming is a major activity in parts of the world that feature rich soil and mild climates; that extraction industries are emphasized in areas that are rich in coal, copper, oil, or other underground resources; that populations tend to be dense in greenbelts but sparse in deserts or polar areas; and so on. They also should develop a sense of ways that humans have overcome or compensated for geographical constraints by altering land forms (e.g., building canals, tunneling through mountains, constructing dams) or developing specialized technology (irrigation in dry areas) or knowledge-based industries (e.g., Swiss watch making, Japanese electronics).

Early map work with children should include opportunities for them to construct maps, not just answer questions about or color in portions of supplied maps. Developing a schematic map of a small surface such as a table or desktop (on which a few items have been strategically placed) will help them understand that maps offer a bird's-eye perspective from above and that symbols or geometric shapes are used to represent salient features. Subsequent construction of maps of their rooms at home, of the classroom or school, the playground, and so forth will help them acquire other basic understandings such as that maps are representations constructed with particular purposes in mind; that they are constructed to scale, so that the relative sizes of the included features and the distances between them correspond to those in the real world; and that map makers help readers interpret the maps by including a compass rose (typically but not always indicating that the map is oriented with north at the top) and a legend that explains the meanings of symbols.

To build understandings and skills in using maps to orient oneself and note relevant directions and distances, you can use maps of the school or neighborhood. For variety, use maps of places that are popular with children, such as zoos, shopping malls, or amusement parks. Frequent reference to maps and globes in the process of teaching about places and events that come up in the curriculum will help students learn that maps provide representations of a broad range of geographic information and therefore are useful for addressing a broad range of geographic questions, not just for planning trips. Children can be helped to appreciate this by viewing and engaging in activities built around the maps used in television weather reports; plotting the origins and movements of their own families on maps; or by studying and discussing the implications of maps showing such things as where the population is increasing or decreasing, where certain key products are developed and exported or must be imported, and so on (Haas, 2001).

Also, as a way to build interest in geography and develop basic geographical knowledge and skills, teachers who use centers in their classrooms should include one or more for geography. Center activity is most effective when the tasks enhance what is developed during large group instruction. Students should be given opportunities to engage in higher order thinking and apply what they are learning. These centers might, for example, include book-, map-, and photo-based activities on world nations or regions, tourist destinations, sites of recent natural disasters, or other current events as well as software-based activities such as the popular *Carmen Sandiego* series or simulated travel programs

that allow students to plan trips (including the forms of transportation and routes taken) and learn about the places they will encounter along the way. For additional ideas about activities built around geographic themes, consult the most relevant journals (*Journal of Geography*, *Social Education*, *Social Studies and the Young Learner*) and websites, notably NationalGeographic.org.

How will you incorporate the use of maps and globes in your social studies teaching to help students grasp principles of location, region, movement, human/environment interaction, and place? What experiences in students' lives can you draw upon to teach the five fundamental themes of geography?

Geography as Citizenship

While citizenship is typically viewed as a political science concept, Morgan (2000) points out that regardless of what is taught in geography classrooms or how it is taught, geographic education is about helping students construct a sense of place as well as belonging and affiliation which serve as a basis for thinking about the world as well as how to participate in it. This provides the underpinnings for citizenship. It serves as another source of identity and appreciation for all students in the classroom who come from other places and serves as a pathway for globalizing our curriculum. Students should be exposed to big ideas, such as the idea that the global location of a nation or region contributes to its importance in international affairs and that no nation-state is an island unto itself; all have some contact with others; hence the nations of the world are interdependent.

Technology Tips

Many technological tools exist to assist you in teaching geography. Google Earth provides photographs of the earth from satellite imagery and allows students to "fly" over their neighborhood, city, and other parts of the world. Other websites, like the CIA World Factbook and NationMaster.com, provide factual information about the physical and cultural geography of countries.

Anthropology

Anthropology is the study of cultures. It usually is associated with studies of past or present societies (e.g., the Inca, the Masai), but it can be applied to studies of any group engaged in what amounts to a shared culture (e.g., rock groupies, college football fans, elementary teachers). Anthropologists seek to depict cultures as they are viewed by insiders, by learning about their perceptual categories and language genres and using these to describe their kinship relations or other societal structures, the nature of and reasons for any subgroups that exist within the larger group, the goals and meanings of the groups' activities and the social mores and skills involved in carrying them out, and so on. Their data collection and analysis procedures are designed to ensure (as much as

possible) that anthropologists observe enough different situations and interview a sufficient range of informants to enable them to construct a reasonably complete and balanced depiction of the culture portrayed as insiders would portray it themselves, free of filtering through the anthropologists' own assumptions and beliefs.

When it addresses ancient cultures, anthropology overlaps with archaeology, and some anthropologists view archaeology as a sub-discipline. When it addresses contemporary societies, anthropology overlaps with cultural geography. The main difference is that anthropologists tend to look first to belief systems as explanations for a culture's social and economic activities, whereas geographers tend to look first to climate, landforms, and other aspects of the physical environment.

The social studies curriculum usually does not include formal courses in anthropology, and anthropological organizations have not established standards for K–12 education. Nevertheless, social studies includes a lot of anthropological content, especially in the middle grades when students study life in different geographic regions and in ancient cultures. Lessons usually focus on material culture (e.g., arts and crafts, household items, architectural styles, clothing, transportation, economic activities and the technologies involved in carrying them out), but they sometimes include coverage of religious or political beliefs and customs. Historical material is usually couched within a “development of Western civilization” theme. Contemporary material is usually either selected to illustrate geographical affordances to and constraints on human activity or couched within a “human family” theme that emphasizes commonalities and cultural universals over differences and exotic practices.

Developments in children's knowledge and thinking about other countries and cultures were summarized in a previous section of this chapter. Most American children acquire early and retain a preference for their own country and culture but show mixed and evolving attitudes about other countries and cultures. They sometimes pick up negative attitudes from family members or the media, but what they learn in school and through personal travel experiences usually supports positive attitudes (Barrett, 2005). Unless they have visited a country or studied it systematically at school, children's impressions of another country tend to be limited to famous landmarks (e.g., the Eiffel Tower in Paris) and whatever they have gleaned about its culture (e.g., they may associate eating fish, chopsticks, pagodas, samurais, martial arts, and tofu with Japan).

Given children's implicit orientations toward chauvinism and toward noticing differences (especially the exotic or bizarre) more than similarities, it is important for teachers to emphasize similarities first and to represent other cultures in ways that reflect the goals of anthropologists and social studies educators. Teachers can begin by capitalizing on the similarities in the classroom and school first, then address the existing diversity. For example, children in any classroom celebrate birthdays and holidays, but they may do so in different ways depending on their family traditions and cultural backgrounds. Exploration of these differences can help students develop a mindset that variations are to be expected and that awareness of, or even participation in, different cultural practices can enrich our lives.

Working from this base, teachers can introduce the concept of *cultural borrowing*, using multiple authentic children's books to portray a variety of traditions and customs. They also can engage their students in sampling foods, learning about unfamiliar traditions, and so on. We encourage teachers to arrange culturally oriented visits to museums or other relevant local sites as well as to arrange classroom visits by parents or other relatives who can come to display and talk about their culture's food, clothing, and so on. However, it may be better to avoid (or at least be prepared to help students place into a broader context) festivals, fairs, or performances that may induce a limited and stereotyped view of particular cultures. For example, not all Chinese people celebrate

Chinese New Year, and people from other cultures may borrow the practice. Members of distinctive cultural groups living in the local community and school librarians and bookstore employees with specialized knowledge in children's literature can be helpful in guiding teachers to materials that will help students develop authentic understandings and appreciation of cultural diversity.

Teaching about the United States might emphasize that its history as a land of immigrants has made it a more diverse and stimulating place to live than places with more homogeneous cultures. Furthermore, instead of stressing differences and focusing on what strikes American children as bizarre, teaching about other cultures can place more emphasis on parallels that reflect the commonalities of human nature. Using food pyramids, typical meals eaten in different societies can be compared to illustrate similarities in food groupings. Different forms of bread can be shown with emphasis on the fact that they are all variations on the same basic food, and other food-related parallels can be noted as well (e.g., sugar and honey as alternative sweetening agents; chopsticks and silverware as alternative eating implements). Food pyramids can help students understand that people everywhere have the same basic needs but satisfy them differently due to differences in available resources, cultural traditions, or personal preferences. Geographical and climatic aspects of the areas in which people live, the major economic activities engaged in their societies, their forms of government, and other local factors may help explain their behavior.

In particular, it is important to help students see each culture through the eyes of its own people rather than through outsiders' stereotypes, to emphasize cultural universals and similarities in purposes and motives more than differences, and to show that what at first may seem exotic or bizarre upon closer inspection usually can be seen as sensible adaptation to the time and place or as parallel to certain features of our own culture.



NCSS Standards Relating to Anthropology

The National Council for the Social Studies (2010) Curriculum Standards call for experiences that provide for the study of culture and cultural diversity. In the early grades, this means experiences that allow students to explore and describe similarities and differences in the ways groups, societies, and cultures address similar human needs and concerns; give examples of how experiences may be interpreted differently by people from diverse cultural perspectives and frames of reference; describe ways in which language, stories, folktales, music, and artistic creations serve as expressions of culture and influence the behavior of people living in a particular culture; compare ways in which people from different cultures think about and deal with their physical environment and social conditions; and give examples and describe the importance of cultural unity and diversity within and across groups. Culture-related activities in the middle grades should call for students to compare similarities and differences in the ways groups, societies, and cultures meet human needs and concerns; explain how information and experiences may be interpreted by people from diverse cultural perspectives and frames of reference; explain and give examples of how language, literature, the arts, architecture, other artifacts, traditions, beliefs, values, and behaviors contribute to the development and transmission of culture; explain why individuals and groups respond differently to their physical and social environments and/or changes to them on the basis of shared assumptions, values, and beliefs; and articulate the implications of cultural diversity, as well as cohesion, within and across groups.

Guidelines for Teaching Anthropology

The geography teaching guidelines that deal with human adaptation and cultural development also apply to the teaching of anthropological content. More specifically, when

studying past or present societies and cultures, it is helpful to organize content around cultural universals and related dimensions that facilitate comparison and contrast. For example, Hanna, Sabaroff, Davies, and Farrar (1966) presented detailed suggestions about ways to organize such studies around nine basic human activities:

1. Protecting and conserving life and resources
2. Producing, exchanging, and consuming goods and services
3. Transporting goods and people
4. Communicating facts, ideas, and feelings
5. Providing education
6. Providing recreation
7. Organizing and governing
8. Expressing aesthetic and spiritual impulses
9. Creating new tools, technology, and institutions

Similarly, Fraenkel (1980) suggested that systematic study and comparison of past or present societies can be organized around the following questions:

1. Who were the people being studied?
2. When did they live?
3. Where did they live?
4. What did they leave behind that tell us something about them?
5. What kinds of work did they do and where did they do it?
6. What did they produce or create?
7. What did they do for recreation?
8. What family patterns did they develop?
9. How did they educate their young?
10. How did they govern and control their society?
11. What customs and beliefs did they hold?
12. What events, individuals or ideas are they especially known for, and how did these affect their lives?
13. What problems did they have?
14. How did they try to deal with these problems?

Certain key ideas appear repeatedly in sources of advice on how to teach elementary students about societies and cultures. One is the importance of focusing on *cultural universals* because these are fundamental categories of the human condition that children can understand based on their own prior experiences. A second is the value of *comparison and contrast* across well-chosen examples that illustrate and promote understanding of the variation to be found on key dimensions. A third is the importance of *explaining cultural adaptations within the context of their time and place* to help students empathize with the people involved and begin to see things from their point of view (as opposed to focusing on the exotic in ways that make the people seem stupid or crazy).

For example, we recommend studying Native Americans within historical and geographical contexts, focusing on a few well-selected tribes in sufficient depth to allow students to develop some appreciation of the similarities and differences in their cultures. We might include an Eastern Woodlands tribe, a Plains tribe, a Southwestern Pueblo tribe, a Pacific Northwest tribe, and (if not already included) a tribe that lived (or better yet, still does live) in your local area. Key ideas to develop might include the following:

1. Native Americans are believed to have crossed from Asia on a land bridge now beneath the Bering Strait, then gradually spread through North and South America.

- 2. Different tribes developed quite a diversity of cultures, although many of them shared common elements centered around knowledge about living off the land and beliefs featuring respect for natural elements and resources. Seasons of the year and local plants and animals often figured prominently in cultural customs and beliefs.
- 3. Depending in part on local geography, climate, and resources, different tribes used different forms of shelter (longhouses, tipis, pueblo apartments), clothing (animal skins, woven cloth), food (meat from hunting and trapping, vegetables from farming, seafood from fishing), and transportation (dugouts, canoes, travois pulled by dogs and later by horses). Some tribes were nomadic, moving with the seasons to follow the animals that they hunted, but most tribes lived continuously in the same place and emphasized farming supplemented with hunting and fishing. Consider using the following chart to document tribes' characteristics.

Tribe	Food	Shelter	Clothing

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- 4. In contrast to what happened in most of Africa and Asia, discovery of the New World by Europeans led not just to colonization or establishment of trade relations, but also to heavy immigration and ultimate repopulation. The land was attractive to Europeans because of its many natural resources and familiar climate and geography. Also, the Native Americans were vulnerable to encroachment because their tribes were mostly small and spread thinly. From a European point of view, vast amounts of desirable land were there for the taking, not owned by anyone in particular. At first, some Native Americans welcomed these newcomers and enjoyed friendly social and economic interactions with them. Resentments began to accumulate as immigrants kept coming and pushing the frontiers of settlement forward, but there was little that the local tribes could do against armies equipped with firearms. Some became assimilated into European settlements or lived on small, locally negotiated reservations, but the major tribes were continually pushed back beyond the frontiers. Eventually, decimated by war, disease, and starvation, they were forcibly relocated to reservations established by the U.S. government.
- 5. Today, many Native Americans still live on these reservations and retain their tribal customs, but others live somewhere other than reservations. (Elaborate with examples, especially of the activities and accomplishments of Native Americans residing locally; conduct inquiry into some of the social and policy issues relating to local tribes).

This treatment of Native Americans would draw on the five fundamental themes of geography as well as on the principles for developing historical content presented in the previous chapter. It also would develop knowledge of where Native Americans came from, what happened to them over the last 500 years, and where and how they live today. In the process, it would attack stereotypes (e.g., that all Indians lived in tipis and hunted with bows and arrows) and help students to see the diversity and appreciate the contributions of various tribes and individuals.

In addition to or instead of using the guidelines presented to study a single culture in considerable detail, you might want to compare selected cultures on a more limited set of dimensions. The NCSS (2010) Curriculum Standards document suggests two ways for doing this. In the first, students would compare and contrast family needs and wants

for people who live in sharply contrasting climates or physical environments. Activities related to this idea would help students develop appreciation of the influences of natural environments on cultural developments.

The second approach would involve developing and charting information about how people meet their needs for food, clothing, and shelter in the home community and in cities located in nations from which your students' families or ancestors migrated (e.g., Juarez, Hanoi, Lagos, Frankfurt). This might be the core of a unit that also would include map and globe activities, videos or other audiovisual input, Internet activities, or classroom visits by parents or others who could show and tell about the other nations' cultural artifacts and practices. We provide a sample chart below.

	Food	Shelter	Clothing	Transportation
Our Family				
Family in Lagos, Nigeria				

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Note: Variation within groups will depend on religious beliefs, economic resources, personal preferences, and so forth.

Older students might conduct inquiry into questions such as, "Why did the people who lived in what is now southern Arizona (or some other purposefully selected location) at different points in history develop specific economic, and cultural activities at the time?" Scaffolded research and discussion relating to this question could help students begin to appreciate that technological, economic, and cultural developments within the region and even the world at a given time can lead to new uses for and even physical reshaping of particular locations. In this case, the same local environment has been used primarily for subsistence farming by the pueblo tribes, for mining and ranching by European-Americans in the more recent past, and for retirement communities, tourism activities, and military and technological purposes today.

Anthropologists often speak of using examples of cultural diversity to "make the familiar strange" and "make the strange familiar." This involves helping students appreciate that, not only are many things done very differently elsewhere than they are here, but in some cases our way is unusual (e.g., our non-metric weights and measures and our relatively large cars and houses). Some people in some places use chopsticks instead of forks, wear white instead of black at funerals, or bow rather than shake hands. Most such differences are merely means for accomplishing the same ends (e.g., bringing small pieces of solid food to the mouth, expressing grief and sympathy at a funeral, performing a greeting ritual as a prelude to social interaction). Many are not arbitrary but explainable with reference to resources and economic or cultural practices.

Whenever you teach about culture, it is important to try to convey an "insider's perspective" by helping students to view cultural practices as their practitioners do, as well as to convey a large and balanced picture of the culture rather than overemphasize the exotic. As Merryfield (2004) put it, "If Japanese students made quilts, ate Southern fried chicken and Boston baked beans, and sang 'Old MacDonald had a farm' would they have acquired information that leads to understanding of Americans today?" (p. 270).

Anthropologists typically emphasize the importance of authentic representations of other cultures, and toward that end recommend liberal use of photos, videos, and cultural artifacts (or at least, authentic facsimiles). We recommend that you develop artifact kits to support your instruction about particular cultures. Many such kits can be purchased from supply houses catering to teachers. You also can collect useful materials on your own (e.g., during visits to Native American reservations or other countries). Besides using the collected materials during instruction, you can feature them within centers where your students can go to learn more about the culture. Good children's literature (both fiction and nonfiction) also is available for use as resources in teaching about cultures. Field (2003), for example, identifies more than 20 such sources for use in a unit on Mexico and provides guidelines for selecting additional sources and using them in learning activities.

Technology Tips

Information about cultures and accompanying lesson plans are widely available on websites like WethePeople.gov. Explore the Internet to find different lesson plans. Evaluate them for accuracy and cultural sensitivity and consider how you would use them.

How could you draw upon your travel or life experiences with other cultures in your social studies teaching?

How would you teach both similarities and differences across cultures?

Summary

Geography is the study of people, places, and environments from a spatial and ecological perspective. Much of the knowledge that geographers have accumulated can be organized within the five themes of absolute and relative location (position on the earth's surface), the physical and human characteristics of places, human-environmental relationships within places, movement between places, and the formation and development of regions. Good geographic instruction builds understandings developed around these themes, rather than confronting students with parades of geographical facts (e.g., place names, import/export data).

Children enter school without much geographic knowledge as well as without much geographic aware-

ness. They have not yet come to appreciate how landforms, climate, and natural resources affect human population patterns and economic activities. They also harbor implicit leanings toward chauvinism, tending to prefer the familiar to the strange and to prefer their own country (or other people or entities with whom they identify) over others. Consequently, it is important to teach geography in ways that develop not only cognitive understandings but dispositions toward empathy and multicultural respect.

The textbook series offer generally good lessons and activities relating to map and globe skills, but in isolation from the rest of the curriculum. We recommend integrating them, and in particular routinely

pointing out places on the map or globe as they arise in teaching (in any subject, not just social studies), and informing or reminding students about any features of these locations that might be relevant to the big ideas of the day's lesson. Use geographic illustrations that are well suited both to your students (level of complexity) and to your instructional goals (illustrating clearly those aspects of the place you want to emphasize).

Because geographers attend not only to the physical characteristics but also the human characteristics of places, they are interested in cultures. Anthropologists, however, focus more specifically on cultures. They seek to depict cultures as they are viewed by insiders, which is an important part of developing empathy and avoiding

chauvinism. Anthropologists also emphasize “making the strange familiar” and “making the familiar strange,” which facilitates cross-cultural comparisons and helps us to transcend our own ethnocentrism by learning to understand our familiar cultural practices within larger global and historical contexts. Making the familiar strange can be as simple as taking an object such as a silk shirt and asking, “Where do you think this came from? Does anyone know how it is made?” Emphasizing commonalities or variations on common themes (such as human actions relating to cultural universals) when teaching about cultures also fosters empathy and other desired multicultural dispositions, whereas overemphasizing the bizarre or exotic can foster chauvinism.

Reflective Questions

1. How would you respond to individuals who believe that the teaching of big ideas associated with geography and anthropology should relate to the development of students' life roles in work, family, leisure, and as citizens? Provide examples to support your response.
2. Often classroom teachers begin the school year with a map and globe unit. What is your opinion of this and why?
3. What do you view as the geographic and anthropological priorities appropriate for your grade level?
4. What do you view as the benefits of incorporating more big ideas associated with geography and anthropology in your current social studies curriculum?
5. Many social studies educators are convinced that U.S. students need to become better informed about the rest of the world in terms of its geography and cultures in order to understand global, economic, and political issues. If you agree, how might you address this matter in your classroom?
6. Many educators believe that leveraging the human resources in your classroom is one of the most powerful ways to address cultural diversity. For example, if you had a child from China, one from India, and another from Brazil, compare and contrast how human activities are conducted in each of these places using the children's families as resources. What is your reaction to this approach?

Your Turn: Geography

If the focus of social studies teaching at your grade level is geography, we suggest that you secure a copy of the Guidelines for Geographic Education. Then contact your state's geographic alliance for information and resources to help you. Review the school's curriculum guide at your grade level and carefully examine the textbook, if one has been adopted. If you have developed your own units, you will want to revisit those materials as well.

As you inspect all of these sources, use the following grid (see Figure 6.1) to plot the key ideas that correspond to the five fundamental themes. Once you have identified the weak spots, spend time developing the key ideas for each. This activity will bring you one step closer to teaching geography in depth.

FIGURE 6.1 Key Ideas that Connect to the Five Fundamental Themes of Geography

Unit	
<i>Five Fundamental Themes</i>	<i>Related to the Five Themes</i>
Location: Position on the earth's surface	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Absolute location 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relative location 	
Place	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical characteristics 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human characteristics 	
Human-environmental relations	
Movement: Humans interacting on the Earth	
Regions: How they form and change	

Sample Interview Schedule Questions

After teaching a unit using the five themes, interview your students using questions that focus on the themes. Study their responses to determine the degree to which they have acquired the big ideas. Select questions that match your goals and major geographic understandings for the unit.

1. Using a range of map types such as physical, political, and climatic, describe your immediate surrounding community. Compare it to the Southwest of the United States. (If you live in the Southwest, choose another region of the country for this activity).
2. Using a road map, plan a trip to Santa Fe, Phoenix, and so forth.
3. Using a range of map types, explain what is special about your local community, Salt Lake, Tucson, White Sands, Reno, and so forth.
4. What specifically have you learned about the people who live in the Southwest? What is special about each of the groups we have studied? Explain the settlement patterns of various groups. What are some of their traditions, customs, beliefs, and values? What types of economic activities would you expect to find in your local area? The Southwest? Why?
5. Would you expect high or low population densities in your local area? The Southwest? Why? Describe how specific parts of the Southwest have been modified to support large concentration areas. What is the nearest city in your local area? How was it modified to support large concentrations of people?
6. Explain why certain parts of the Southwest are attractive for retirement developments. Do you think it is more or less attractive for retirement than the local area? Why?
7. How has technology influenced life in the Southwest?
8. Why are certain parts of the Southwest growing so rapidly? Are there parts of your region growing? Explain.
9. How would you characterize the Southwest as a region? Compare it to the region in which you live. How are they the same? Different? Which would you prefer to live in as an adult? Why?

Your Turn: A Resource Unit on Mountain Regions

There are numerous ways to examine and enhance the mountain region resource unit. We suggest you develop your plans with an eye toward the integrative aspects because the content naturally lends itself to more than one subject for the development of “meaningfulness.” Remember, content, skills, and activities included in the name of integration should be educationally significant, desirable, and authentic. Such content, skills, and activities should be selected because they foster rather than disrupt or nullify the accomplishment of major social studies goals.

We have provided a framework and an example for you to use as you expand your unit (see Figure 6.2). See Appendix C for the Resource Unit on Mountain Regions.

After you have completed the framework, review it carefully using the guiding questions for successful integration.

- *Does the integrated activity clearly match the social education goal?*
- *Would an “outsider” clearly recognize the activity as social studies?*
- *Does the activity allow students to meaningfully develop or authentically apply important social studies content?*
- *Does it involve authentic application of skills or knowledge from other disciplines?*
- *Will students understand its social education purpose?*

FIGURE 6.2 Mountain Regions: Sample Page from Unit Overview Chart

Goal 1	Key Ideas	Specific Activities to Match the Goal	Other Subjects Included	Materials Needed
Help students to understand the nature of mountains, the physical environments that they create, and the advantages and limitations that these environments pose for human activities.	Mountains are not just hills but are very high elevations of land.	Have students locate the nearest mountain range, first on a physical map, then on a topographical one. Using the scientific method, have the students speculate about how the range was formed. Examine together the line of inquiry.	Science	Topographical maps, pictures of mountains, reference books, and videos of mountain regions. (You can acquire these from the tour bureau or travel agency and adapt them to the unit goal). Have students observe the characteristics of mountains. Have them, as they observe, imagine the advantages and limitations these environments pose for human activities.
	They were formed by movements of the earth’s surface plates or by volcanic activity erupting from below the surface.	Have students gather data to establish evidence. Then have them gather information about the human activities found in this range.		
	Often people make a living in these regions by selecting occupations that require specialized skills more than abundant raw materials. Mountain features and their cloistered effects often stimulate creativity.	Beware of “make and take” cutesy-type volcano experiments that are not authentic and detract from the social studies understanding.		
		Have students investigate the type of specialized skills that people in the mountain region nearest them possess. If possible, have an artist, writer, or musician whose work has been inspired by the mountains visit the class.	Art, music, and literature	Books, paintings and music scores of individuals inspired by the nearby mountain region.

Your Turn: Anthropology

Revisit your social studies curriculum for the year, paying particular attention to anthropology. Add a new layer of meaning to the content.

Example

- Unit Topic: Urban Communities
- Added Social Science Discipline: Anthropology
- Added Big Ideas
 - Communities benefit from the influence of people who have come from different countries and who have different experiences.
 - Communities celebrate holidays. Holidays can be celebrated in many different ways.

- The cultures represented in a community determine in some ways the use of its resources.
- In some communities, people speak the language of the country they came from.
- Cultural borrowing occurs when people share their beliefs, traditions, and customs with others.

To help you plan at the next level of specificity, we encourage you to revisit the section of the chapter that focuses on anthropology. List key features that naturally fit with your unit topics.

Features	My Plan of Action
Constructing understandings about why people do what they do (goals and motives of a lot of people)	When teaching about the Native Americans, for example, I will explain that they made decisions about what sort of shelters to build based on the climate, available resources, their need for mobility, and so forth.
Connecting new content to students' prior knowledge, misconceptions, and so forth	When beginning a new unit, I will do some form of assessment (e.g., TWL, pose "I wonders," interview students in groups). I will also spend time acknowledging students' exposure to fanciful stories and fictional worlds—and explain the differences between factual and fictional.
Providing for the study of culture and diversity	
Representing other cultures in ways that reflect goals of the anthropologists and social studies educators	
Organizing content associated with past and present societies around cultural universals (human activities)	
Addressing issues of diversity including race, ethnicity, gender, and social and economic differences	
Addressing production, distribution, and consumption of goods and services	
Providing opportunities for students to engage in decision making	

HOW CAN I TEACH THE OTHER SOCIAL SCIENCES POWERFULLY?

TEACHER VOICE

Alyssa Frollo, First-Year Teacher

Before reading Chapter 7 in this book I was extremely hesitant about teaching psychology, sociology, economics, and civics and government. You see, I was a science major and the only social studies classes I had taken since I graduated high school were five classes required by the elementary education program/university, none of which had anything to do with the social science topics covered in this chapter. Because of my lack of knowledge in these four areas, I was really hoping that this chapter would help me gain a better insight into the content and how to meaningfully teach my elementary students.

Sure enough, after reading Chapter 7, I feel better equipped to teach these content areas to elementary students. I was especially struck by the sections that addressed children's knowledge and thinking. I am now beginning to understand the importance of assessing students' prior knowledge and to incorporate the results in my planning.

There were many fantastic ideas and teaching strategies in this chapter but there was one that really stuck out to me and was proven to be true in my internship. In the section on psychology the authors mention that, "the particular activities that teachers use to help students develop their concepts of self and personal identity are not as important as the attitudes and beliefs that teachers project in the process." This statement applies to teaching any lesson in any subject. During my internship I found that this was something that was extremely important when teaching my second graders—students will pick up on biases, feelings the teachers have toward a topic, and so forth. It is crucial for an educator to always reflect on his or

her ideas and attitudes about a topic before teaching it, to avoid any unintentional negativity.

This chapter is informative, engaging, helpful, and will definitely be useful when teaching psychology, sociology, economics, and civics and government. When reading it, not only did I think about what I can do in my classroom with each of these social science areas but also what I need to consider in order to project a positive attitude. With the help of the content of this chapter, I now have a firm grasp on why social studies is important in an elementary classroom; it really does help students become contributing members to our democratic society.

The social studies curriculum in the primary grades typically consists of lessons organized within the expanding communities sequence and emphasizing content from history, geography, anthropology, sociology, political science, and economics. This content is introduced where it emerges naturally within the pan-disciplinary social studies curriculum, and it is developed relatively informally. That is, even where it appears within its own units, instruction is confined to developing a cluster of concepts and principles without attempting to provide a general introduction to the disciplines.

As an elementary social studies teacher, you should acquire sufficient familiarity with each of the social sciences to enable you to represent them faithfully when teaching aspects of their content. Research indicates that networks of connected knowledge structured around powerful ideas can be learned with understanding and retained in forms that make them accessible for application. If you have not had basic courses in some of these disciplines, we recommend that you study introductory textbooks in each of them, continuing until you have a clear idea about how practitioners of the discipline think about and carry out their work. This will help ensure that the social science content you teach is both accurate and true to the spirit of the discipline that produced it.

In the previous chapters we addressed history, geography, and anthropology, so in this chapter, we will consider psychology, sociology, economics, and political science (civics and government) content typically taught in the elementary grades. We will address the nature of this content, students' likely prior knowledge and misconceptions relating to it, and standards and other guidelines for teaching.

Coherent Content

Principle 5: Coherent Content: To facilitate meaningful learning and retention, content is explained clearly and developed with emphasis on its structure and connections. Coherent content refers to content whose knowledge and skills are connected to each other, whereby the sequence of ideas or events makes sense and the relationships are apparent. Coherent content is facilitated through the use of powerful ideas as an organizational tool. Please see Chapter 14 for a more in-depth description of this principle.

Psychology

Psychology is not formally taught in the K–12 curriculum except for a single (usually elective) course in high school. However, this social science is relevant to elementary social studies in at least four respects.

First, studies of developments in children's social knowledge and thinking indicate that children tend to think as psychologists before they begin learning to think as anthropologists, sociologists, economists, or political scientists (Carey, 1985; Brophy & Alleman, 2005). Until they start school, and sometimes for a year or two thereafter, their purviews are mostly restricted to their personal experiences within their families and communities. They are often exposed to fanciful stories and fictional worlds (e.g., Harry Potter's), but not to factual information about life in the past or in other cultures (or, if they are, it may be through watching news that they may have trouble understanding). Furthermore, even what they know about their own society is focused on the goal-oriented activities of everyday living, which they make sense of by inferring people's intentions and motives.

When asked to explain macro-level social phenomena, children tend to respond with narratives that personalize the events around the goals and motives of a few people, without reference to macro-level cultural, social, economic, or political trends or principles. They are likely to say that the New World was discovered because Columbus wanted to find gold; African-Americans attained full civil rights because Martin Luther King, Jr., gave a speech; the government consists of the president and a lot of helpers; banks give families money to use to buy houses because the nice people who work there want to be helpful; certain native tribes built tipis because they had a lot of unused animal skins that they did not want to waste or because they could cook in them and the smoke from the fire would escape through the open top; Americans eat more bread but the Chinese eat more rice because we like bread better and have butter knives but they like rice better and have chopsticks; and so on.

Second, because of its focus on human actions related to meeting culturally universal needs and wants, elementary social studies is essentially an introduction to the human condition, with attention to its development over time and variation across cultures. Furthermore, much of it is rendered in narrative formats that structure the content around people's goals and motives. Thus, its content matches up well with children's tendency to think in micro-level psychological terms rather than macro-level social science terms when constructing understandings of why people do what they do. This matching offers initial advantages to teachers because it makes it easier for them to connect new content to students' prior knowledge and develop it in ways that sustain interest and understanding. It also presents challenges, however, because instructional goals usually include not only adding new elements to students' existing knowledge structures but constructing new ones and restructuring old ones. At least initially, students may be confused by, and may even resist, teachers' attempts to expand their purviews. For example, children's familiarity with narrative structures often leads to preferences for unambiguous storylines culminating in clear conclusions and moral implications, so they may be frustrated with aspects of history that are open to multiple interpretations and unlikely to be resolved through consensus on a single "real story" (Barton & Levstik, 2004), or that a decision of which cereal to buy or where to get the best deal on a bicycle is contingent on multiple factors rather than a single answer.

Third, much of the content traditionally taught in kindergarten and first-grade involves learning about the self and developing personal identity (both basic topics in psychology).

Fourth, we and many other social studies educators emphasize the importance of teaching content not only for understanding but for appreciation and life application. This implies helping students see connections between the content and their personal identities and agendas as well as developing the content using examples and activities that support students' self-efficacy perceptions with respect to their ability to apply what they are learning in their personal, social, and civic decision making and behavior. Thus, if you have not already done so, you should become familiar with basic principles of child development, motivation, and other relevant aspects of psychology.

NCSS Standards Relating to Psychology



The National Council for the Social Studies (2010) Curriculum Standards include a theme, *Individual Development and Identity*. In the early grades, it calls for experiences that allow students to describe personal changes over time, such as those related to physical development and personal interests; describe personal connections to place—especially place as associated with immediate surroundings; describe the unique features of one's nuclear and extended families; show how learning and physical development affect behavior; identify and describe ways family, groups, and community influence the individual's daily life and personal choices; explore factors that contribute to one's personal identity such as interests, capabilities, and perceptions; analyze a particular event to identify reasons individuals might respond to it in different ways; and work independently and cooperatively to accomplish goals. The middle grades should include experiences that allow students to relate personal changes to social, cultural, and historical contexts; describe personal connections to place—as associated with community, nation, and world; describe the ways family, gender, ethnicity, nationality, and institutional affiliations contribute to personal identity; relate such factors as physical endowment and capabilities, learning, motivation, personality, perception, and behavior to individual development; identify and describe ways regional, ethnic, and national cultures influence individuals' daily lives; identify and describe the influence of perception, attitudes, values, and beliefs on personal identity; identify and interpret examples of stereotyping, conformity, and altruism; and work independently and cooperatively to accomplish goals.

Guidelines for Teaching Psychology

Much teaching of psychology in the early grades focuses on developing concepts and attitudes relating to self and personal identity. Children's ideas about themselves tend to focus on their physical characteristics (e.g., size, hair color) and behavior (e.g., skills, hobbies, interests), not their personal, social, or moral traits. To the extent that they draw comparisons, it is with siblings or frequent playmates. They do not yet have much knowledge about the range of individual differences that exists among age peers in their own community, let alone the world at large. The majority of most children's opportunities to think about themselves within larger contexts (e.g., our society, the world, and the human condition through time and across locations) occur at school.

Supporting students' personal development is part of the informal curriculum that is embedded in the socializing that teachers do in the process of explaining rules and behavioral expectations and molding their classes into learning communities. These interactions with students provide many opportunities not just to teach rules but also to develop positive social self-concepts—to encourage students to think of themselves as pro-social individuals who are caring and helpful toward others and good citizens of

the classroom community and society generally. In some school districts, the curriculum features a guidance strand that includes units on moral education and character development.

Within the academic curriculum, most teaching about self and personal identity occurs in social studies classes, especially in the early primary grades. Lessons and activities focusing on physical characteristics are common (e.g., measuring heights and weights, outlining body parts or even entire bodies, or filling out questionnaires on physical characteristics such as eye color, then constructing and discussing a table or graph). “Student of the Week” displays and “Show and Tell” activities provide additional opportunities for students to collect information about themselves and discuss it with classmates. Commonly taught lessons focus on topics such as growth and change with development, birthdays, and rites of passage, ways in which individual children are special or even unique, children’s talents and interests and their potential implications for occupational choices, and ways that children can make a difference in the lives of other people. (For examples, see Alleman & Brophy, 2003b.)

The particular activities that teachers use to help students develop their concepts of self and personal identity are not as important as the attitudes and beliefs that teachers project in the process. The goal is to help children articulate tacit knowledge and acquire new information about themselves and others within an overall positive context of acceptance (or where relevant, celebration). Two teaching strategies are especially important. First, be matter-of-fact, descriptive, and explanatory (but not emotional or judgmental) when talking about individual characteristics over which children have little or no control (e.g., size, appearance, physical coordination, socioeconomic status). Where relevant, talk about trade-offs (e.g., smaller size is an advantage for certain sports and physical activities). In any case, avoid talking about individuals’ characteristics in ways that are likely to cause them to become objects of pity from classmates. The idea is to socialize students to expect and value diversity as the norm, and thus to respond with matter-of-fact acceptance to unusual personal characteristics and behavior (except for antisocial behavior).

Second, when teaching or talking to individuals about knowledge or skills, portray these as developed through commitment to learning activities, not as limited by genetic endowment or other factors beyond the students’ control. Students who consistently receive these two kinds of messages from their teachers are likely to feel good about both themselves and their classmates and to think in terms of reaching short-term goals as steps toward longer term goals, rather than worrying about embarrassing themselves or feeling the need to put down others.

Children’s literature is an especially rich source for teaching about individual development and identity. As Krey (1998) notes, good children’s literature provides students with an insider’s perspective that includes the emotions of human events as well as opportunities to identify with characters or emotions that connect to their own personal experiences. Krey’s book includes annotated recommendations of children’s books useful for teaching about all 10 of the NCSS themes. For the theme dealing with individual development and identity, these selections include a book that values human diversity in the context of making observations about physical differences; a portrayal of an eight-year-old, northern, urban African-American girl’s visit to the rural North Carolina farm on which she was born; a book in which a girl tells the story of how she was adopted; and a book in which a wheelchair-mobile boy with muscular dystrophy talks about how his life changed after he acquired a service dog trained to respond to his commands. See also *Notable Tradebooks for Young Children*, published yearly by the NCSS. Annotators have indicated the NCSS curriculum themes related to each recommended book.

How will you provide learning opportunities for students to develop understandings of psychological principles? When students participate in “Student of the Week” or “Show and Tell” how will you help them deepen their understanding of individual development and identity?

Sociology

Sociology is the study of social life, social change, and the social causes and consequences of human behavior. The family is the basic social unit in most societies and the source of some of the most fundamental learning. Sociologists investigate the structure of social groups, organizations, and society as a whole, and how people interact within those contexts. In particular, they look at contrasting social status and the role and expectation associated with it (e.g., gender, social class, race, and ethnicity; minority group membership; childhood, adolescence, and adulthood; power and positions of leadership; business ownership, management, and labor; social, political, and religious organizations; crime, poverty, and other social problems; the media and mass communications). These areas of interest overlap considerably with those of anthropologists. However, anthropologists study small groups or societies and focus on belief systems, whereas sociologists study large and complex modern societies and focus on social status and role expectations.

Sociology is not formally taught in the K–12 curriculum except for a single course (usually an elective) in high school, but the curriculum contains a lot of sociological content. History instruction frequently makes reference to advances in gender or racial equity, social movements, labor relations, and other sociological topics. Studies of the family, the neighborhood, and the community in the primary grades typically include content dealing with social status and roles, occupations, and social organizations, and material on these and other sociological topics are included in what is taught about the development of the state and nation in the middle grades.

Children’s Knowledge and Thinking about Sociology

Children enter school not only well aware of sex differences but usually somewhat knowledgeable and often strongly opinionated about gender roles and expectations. They identify with their own sex and want to learn about and display behaviors associated with it and avoid behaviors associated with the opposite sex. Most of their gender-related thinking is focused on salient aspects of the cultural universal, childhood: preferences for toys, games, books, hobbies, and so forth that are associated with their own sex. However, they also have some knowledge of gender typing in adult roles and occupations, including awareness of associated status differences (Durkin, 2005).

Children also enter school with some awareness of social and economic differences, at least at the level of recognizing extremes of wealth and poverty. Primary-grade children usually cannot explain these differences or else offer explanations confined to differences in personal characteristics such as intelligence or ability (i.e., wealthier people have jobs that require more education, effort, or talent). By the middle grades, their explanations

also begin to incorporate sociological factors such as political power, prejudice, and exploitation, or limited opportunity structures and life chances. Even as they develop awareness of constraints on occupational choice, they remain optimistic about their own occupational chances.

Children's ideas about social inequalities are influenced by their social backgrounds. Compared to working-class children, middle-class children are more aware that the income differences between people from different socioeconomic classes are sizeable rather than minor, offer more complete explanations for these differences, and are likely to view them as fair or deserved (Emler & Dickinson, 2005).

Young children also begin school well aware of racial and ethnic differences in skin color and other physical characteristics, but this does not seem to affect their social behavior (e.g., playmate preferences, patterns of interaction with children of different races). As they continue to develop, the degree to which they attach importance to racial and ethnic differences and associate them with beliefs that lead to prejudice and discrimination varies with the socialization influences to which they are exposed (Hirschfeld, 2005; Lo Coco, Inguglia, & Pace, 2005). Sometimes, what children learn from their families or peers competes with teachers' efforts to value diversity.



NCSS Standards Relating to Sociology

Sociological topics are emphasized in the theme, *Individuals, Groups, and Institutions* in the NCSS (2010) Curriculum Standards. In the early grades, it calls for experiences that allow students to identify roles as learned behavior patterns in group situations such as student, family member, peer play group member, or club member; give examples of and explain group and institutional influences such as religious beliefs, laws, and peer pressure, on people, events, and elements of culture; identify examples of institutions and describe the interactions of people with institutions; identify and describe examples of tensions between and among individuals, groups or institutions, and how belonging to more than one group can cause internal conflicts; identify and describe examples of tension between an individual's beliefs and government policies and laws; give examples of the role of institutions in furthering both continuity and change; and show how groups and institutions work to meet individual needs and promote the common good, and identify examples of where they fail to do so. Activities related to this theme in the middle grades will allow students to demonstrate an understanding of concepts such as role, status, and social class in describing the interactions of individuals and social groups; analyze group and institutional influences on people, events, and elements of culture; describe the various forms institutions take and the interactions of people with institutions; identify and analyze examples of tensions between expressions of individuality and group or institutional efforts to promote social conformity; identify and describe examples of tensions between belief systems and government policies and laws; describe the role of institutions in furthering both continuity and change; and apply knowledge of how groups and institutions work to meet individual needs and promote the common good.

Teaching Sociological Content

The NCSS learning expectations relating to sociology strike us as overly ambitious, especially those dealing with institutions and other macro-level aspects of society. However, even young children have experience with some social organizations and structures (e.g., family, school, community, church, organizations dealing with youth sports, and recreation activities). For a unit on Family Living, see Alleman and Brophy

(2002) as part of a three-volume series, *Social Studies Excursions*. Discussions of their involvements with these groups and institutions can help them begin to appreciate ideas such as roles and tensions that exist among individuals, groups, and institutions (e.g., time demands and conflicting schedules can create role conflicts for children trying to simultaneously keep up with their schoolwork, play on both soccer and hockey teams in youth sports leagues, take piano lessons and keep up with practice expectations, and complete the chores expected of them at home).

Children also can understand and profit from discussion of certain aspects of macro-level social phenomena that come up in history or current events (e.g., discrimination and equity issues as they relate to women and minorities; conflict over laws or political policies between groups representing different economic or value positions). Learning basic information about conflicts over issues such as minimum wage laws or environmentally sensitive mining or forestry operations can help students to appreciate the fact that different people have conflicting vested interests in these issues and tend to join organizations that lobby in support of their interests. Classroom debates about such issues can be valuable learning experiences, especially if they are scaffolded to ensure that all students become well informed about both sides of the issue.

The NCSS (2010) Curriculum Standards identify several recommended activities relating to individuals, groups, and institutions. In one, second graders working in small groups brainstorm issues of concern within their community, identify organizations in the community that address that concern, and then develop ideas about how they can become personally involved with these efforts. In another, an early elementary teacher addresses community concerns during a class meeting. The class decides to collect school supplies and fill donated backpacks for students living in the shelter designated by their school's "Giving Tree" project. In another, the teacher introduces her third graders to the concept of role through studies of an ant farm and bee hive, then has them apply the concept through analyzing the roles (and related behavioral expectations) played out by themselves and others in situations they experience in and out of school.

To teach about tensions between individuals and social or governmental institutions, a fourth grade teacher used biographical readings and research to acquaint students with civil rights and social acceptance groundbreakers such as Martin Luther King, Jr., Jackie Robinson, Amelia Earhart, and Cesar Chavez, calling attention to the obstacles they had to overcome and the approaches they used in doing so. Recommended activities for the middle grades included learning about and then creating political cartoons to represent group or institutional conflict and researching historically noteworthy groups involved in such conflict (e.g., the labor movement, the Ku Klux Klan).

We believe that instruction about social and political organizations and institutions should occur within a context of emphasis on values basic to preserving a healthy democratic society. Although it is understandable and appropriate for different groups to pursue the agendas of most importance to them, conflicts need to be bounded by concern for the common good and protection of everyone's rights. A related principle is that, where possible, leaders should develop negotiated solutions that are acceptable to as many stakeholders as possible rather than thinking in terms of battles in which winners will impose their will on losers. Finally, it is worth helping students to recognize that although voluntary group membership usually brings many benefits to participants, it also can create conflicts when the leadership or the majority of group members favor a policy that differs with one's interests or values. In these cases, one must decide whether to "go along to get along" or to opt out of that activity or even from a group. Most children experience these conflicts periodically, outside if not inside school (as when their friendship group is contemplating doing something immoral, illegal, or dangerous).

How will you scaffold students' learning about the ways groups and institutions experience conflict as well as work to meet individual needs and promote the common good? How will you have students draw upon their own life experiences in these discussions?

Economics

If you have never taken a course in economics, you may think that the subject is simply about money—personal savings and bank accounts, budgeting, and making decisions about purchases. However, economists define their discipline much more broadly, as the study of the production, distribution, and consumption of goods and services. It addresses decision making about obtaining and using all kinds of resources, not just money but others such as time, energy, or raw materials. Also, the scope extends from the micro-level of personal economics to the macro-level of national budgets, gross national products, and international markets and banking systems.

Elementary students are not ready for most aspects of macro-economics, but they can and should learn micro-economics and most of the basic concepts and principles of the field. Many of these (e.g., needs and wants, scarcity, supply and demand, opportunity cost) lend themselves to experiential learning through activities calling for students to make decisions about how to spend their time or money. Economics lessons teach important skills involved in making good decisions. They also dispose students toward becoming well informed about relevant issues and considering the likely consequences of their choices before committing themselves to action. Economic literacy is vital for all individuals and possesses at least four characteristics, including the value of economics in the various roles people play in society (e.g. consumers, savers, investors; the benefits of economic literacy to citizenship and decision making on public issues; the importance of the application of economic reasoning, not merely knowledge of economic facts or concepts; and the ubiquitous nature of economic phenomena) (Miller & VanFossen, 2008).

In the elementary grades, instruction rarely focuses directly on economics except for a few lessons on personal economics and very basic economic concepts. However, economic themes and content pervade the curriculum even in the early years. Developments in the technologies used to exploit natural resources and produce goods and services can be the focus of much of history instruction, and economic goals and motives are emphasized as reasons for many, if not most, major historical events (e.g., the development and expansion of trade, voyages of discovery, colonization, and wars of acquisition). Similarly, studies of communities, states, nations, or geographical regions typically include a strand focused on natural resources, industries, occupations, and the goods and services produced by the people who live there.

Children's Knowledge and Thinking about Economics

Research on developments in children's economic understanding has shown that young children tend to believe in a benevolent world in which people get whatever money they need from banks simply by asking for it and shopkeepers sell items for the same price at which they were bought (Berti & Bombi, 1988; Byrnes, 1996; Furnham, 1996). Yet they also recognize that entrepreneurs do not have to be honest to be profitable (Siegler & Thompson, 1998). Even when economic understandings are valid, they often are limited: Children may

know that money is printed by the government but not realize that the amounts of money in circulation are carefully regulated; they may know that banks are places to keep money safe but not know anything about other banking operations; or they may think that the value of an item depends only on the resources that go into producing it. In addition, certain misconceptions are common: The price of an item depends on its size, property is owned by those who use it, or the value of money depends on its color, picture, size, or serial number (Schug & Hartoonian, 1996).

Berti (2002) identified the following trajectories in children's knowledge about economics. Preschoolers typically show no understanding of economic institutions, and they do not understand the value of money or how it is used in buying and selling. If offered coins, they may prefer larger, more familiar, or more attractive coins to more valuable ones. They are aware that their parents make money by working, but they also think that money is available on request from banks and obtained as change from shopkeepers. In the early primary years (ages 6 to 8), they develop initial comprehension of the value and function of money and begin to represent banks as places where people deposit their money to protect it from thieves (rather than as sources of money).

Older children (ages 8 to 10) mention several sources of money that owners can use to pay their employees, such as earning it through their own jobs, getting it from banks, getting it from the government, or even getting it from the employees themselves (who must pay in order to be hired). Knowledge about shop profits and banking operations (e.g., deposits, loans, interest, and their relationships) usually is not acquired until at least ages 9 or 10, although it can be taught earlier (Berti & Monaci, 1998). Until then, children do not realize that employees are paid with money acquired from the sale of goods or services produced by their work, and that retail prices must be higher than wholesale prices to enable shopkeepers to make a living. Most children do not know about bank interest, and even if they do, they usually do not understand how banks make a profit through the difference between deposit interest and loan interest.

Studies of children as consumers indicate that they are often brand conscious but seldom price conscious when asked to represent shopping or purchases (John, 1999; McNeal, 1992), even though probing may reveal that they know the approximate cost of the items (Pliner, Freedman, Abramovitch, & Darke, 1996). As they progress through the early grades they gradually become more knowledgeable about the value of money and sophisticated about managing it. These developments emerge sooner among children who are high achievers in mathematics or who have had direct economic experiences (e.g., receiving an allowance, saving for a purchase, having their own bank account) (Abramovitch, Freedman, & Pliner, 1991; Sonuga-Barke & Webley, 1993).

Our own research (Brophy & Alleman, 2005) revealed many of these same findings and generated some new ones. We found that K-3 students often were vague about the difference between renting or buying housing, or they described the difference in terms of planning to live in the home for a short time versus a long time rather than in terms of acquiring ownership of the home. Despite some intuitive understanding of the limitations of bartering systems, they could not explain that money systems were invented because purchasing with money is easier and more convenient than trading. They were vague about where money comes from (i.e., that it is made by the government). Many described banks simply as places where people put extra money for safekeeping (i.e., each person's money is kept in a separate box), or as places to go to get money (simply by asking for it). Some mentioned using banks to pay bills or cash checks, but none said anything about checking accounts, loans, or other financial services. Most knew that checks are used to receive or transmit money, but only a minority knew that the money specified on checks that people write is debited from their bank accounts. Similarly, most children knew about when and where credit cards would be used, but

only a minority understood that using them generates bills and eventually reduces one's bank account.

When asked about acquiring the money needed to start a business or purchase a home, students talked about building it up through savings or getting it as a gift or personal loan from a friend or relative, but not about securing a loan from a bank. When asked about prices (why things cost what they do), they talked about the presumed inherent value of the object, the need to pay the person who made the object, or the seller's decision to set and insist on a given price, but they did not mention supply and demand or the idea that something is worth whatever the market will pay.

These and other responses to our interviews led us to include the following as main ideas in an instructional unit on money developed for primary-grade students (Alleman & Brophy, 2003b):

- *Money is a medium of exchange, needed in all but the simplest and most isolated societies.*
- *Several denominations of coins and currency are needed to make it convenient for people to compile exact amounts or make change.*
- *Before the idea of a medium of exchange was invented, people had to rely on trading (barter).*
- *Money eliminates several problems associated with trading and makes economic exchanges much easier.*
- *Early forms of money (such as wampum or precious stones) were less convenient to store and use than more modern coins and paper money.*
- *U.S. coins and bills include a representation of a past president or another significant American on one side and an American symbol on the other side, words and numbers indicating the value of the coin or bill, and other material such as slogans, information about the depicted person, and information about when and where the money was manufactured.*
- *Money is made in factories (mints) run by the federal government.*
- *Banks not only provide safekeeping for money but also pay interest on accounts and provide loans, checking accounts, credit card accounting, and other financial services.*
- *Budgets are plans for managing finances (and in particular, keeping spending within one's means).*
- *Writing checks and using credit cards allow people to transfer money without having to exchange bills and coins, but they need to keep track of these transactions because the money is deducted from their accounts at their banks.*
- *When people want to start a business or buy a home and do not have all of the money needed to do so, they can get a loan from a bank. (They will have to pay back the loan plus interest, but they are willing to do so because this allows them to start the business or purchase the home now, without having to wait until they accumulate the full amount.)*
- *The value of an item ultimately comes down to what potential purchasers are willing to pay for it.*
- *Most people earn most of their money by working at jobs.*
- *Ordinarily a country's money is good only in that country, but it can be exchanged for an equivalent amount of another country's money, which then can be spent in that country.*

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National Standards for Economics Teaching

Different groups interested in economics have different interests and thus different priorities concerning what ought to be taught in the schools. Academic economists would

emphasize the basic concepts, principles, and data-collection and analysis methods used in the discipline. Business groups would emphasize savings, investments, and knowledge and values related to the free market economy. Consumer advocates would emphasize critical thinking about advertising and good decision making about spending, credit, and other aspects of personal economics. These and other stakeholders have yet to agree on a single set of standards, let alone a complete economics curriculum.

The National Council on Economic Education (NCEE), an organization of economists and educators interested in economics education, developed a set of voluntary national standards for teaching economics as a discipline. Some of these standards deal with macroeconomics and are better suited to instruction in high school (e.g., monetary and fiscal policy, unemployment and inflation, the role of government in regulating the national economy), but others are appropriate for elementary students (e.g., scarcity, the role of incentives, specialization and trade, entrepreneurship, and profit). Elaboration of these standards, including definitions, related concepts, standards and benchmarks, and links to classroom-tested lessons can be accessed at NCEE's website. The NCEE also sells curriculum guides and lesson plans targeted at the primary, intermediate, or upper grades, as well as a guide to teaching economics using children's literature. The lesson plans available through NCEE's website have been field tested by teachers at the target grade levels and revised over the years. Other web-based sources of economics lessons for the elementary grades include the Indiana Council for Economic Education site (www.econed-in.org/) and the economic education site at James Madison University (www.williamcwood.com/econed/).

Economics standards also appear in the NCSS (2010) Curriculum Standards. One of the 10 themes calls for experiences that provide for the study of how people organize for the *Production, Distribution, and Consumption* of goods and services. In the early grades, such experiences allow students to give examples that show how scarcity and choice govern our economic decisions; distinguish between needs and wants; identify examples of private and public goods and services; give examples of the various institutions that make up economic systems such as families, workers, banks, labor unions, government agencies, small businesses, and large corporations; describe how we depend upon workers with specialized jobs and the ways in which they contribute to the production and exchange of goods and services; describe the influence of incentives, values, traditions, and habits on economic decisions; explain and demonstrate the role of money in everyday life; describe the relationship of price to supply and demand; use economic concepts such as supply, demand, and price to help explain events in the community and nation; and apply knowledge of economic concepts in developing a response to current local economic issues, such as how to reduce the flow of trash into a rapidly filling landfill. In the middle grades, activities relating to this strand allow students to explain examples of ways that economic systems structure choices about how goods and services are to be produced and distributed; describe the role that supply and demand, prices, incentives, and profits play in determining what is produced and distributed in a competitive market system; explain the difference between private and public goods and services; describe a range of examples of the various institutions that make up economic systems such as households, business firms, banks, government agencies, labor unions, and corporations; describe the role of specialization and exchange in the economic process; explain and illustrate how values and beliefs influence different economic systems; differentiate among various forms of exchange and money; compare basic economic systems according to who determines what is produced, distributed, and consumed; use economic concepts to help explain historical and current developments and issues in local, national, or global contexts; and use economic reasoning to compare different proposals for dealing with a contemporary social issue such as unemployment, acid rain, or high-quality education.

Teaching about Economics

The NCSS (1994, 2010) Curriculum Standards include some interesting activities relating to production, distribution, and consumption. In one example from NCSS (1994), a primary class is divided into two teams to make gingerbread cookies. One team works as an assembly line, with each person having a unique role, and the other works as individuals, with each creating his or her own version (how products in the craft industry are made). The two groups can compare how many products each team produced. Afterwards, the students discuss and write about the trade-offs embedded in the two methods (e.g., assembly lines facilitate speed and quality control, but doing the entire job as an individual affords more independence and opportunities for creativity, and sometimes results in a more well-made product).

In another example from NCSS (2010), the students produce Econo-lizards, a new type of toy. During the activity the teacher reminds the students that all goods and services come from people just like us who produce those goods and services. At the conclusion of the activity, each child is asked what kind of a good or service he or she would like to produce in the future. In another example from NCSS (2010), a fourth grade class engages in an entire unit on businesses, in which the culminating activity is a school-wide market day. Part of this learning opportunity includes solving the problem of how to use their profit.

To teach about trade and economic interdependence, in another lesson (NCSS, 1994) a class is divided into seven groups, each representing a country preparing to build a new structure to house its government. Each group is given a bag of supplies, but when the groups open them they discover that one group has only some glue and a pair of scissors, another has only crayons and paper, another only sticks, and so on. The groups discover that they can accomplish their construction task by trading surplus materials for the materials they lack, although it will be important to consider supply and demand in deciding what constitutes a fair deal.

In another example (NCSS, 1994), an ongoing current event (a debate about whether a local property should be developed as a park or as a strip mall and condos) is used to teach middle grade students about opportunity cost at the community level. The class is divided into a park group and a developer group, each assigned to research the pros and cons of both sides and develop an argument designed to persuade the town council to adopt its plan. To enhance the authenticity of the activity, a group of school administrators, teachers, and other adults is assembled to simulate the town council in listening to the presentations and then making a decision (taking care to compliment both sides on the strengths of their presentations).

Economics educators often recommend using children's literature as a vehicle for teaching economic concepts and principles (VanFossen, 2003). Besides offering motivational benefits, stories provide contexts within which to embed authentic examples of economic decision making. Kehler (1998) recommended 20 children's literature selections suitable to this purpose, keyed to the voluntary national content standards in economics.

The most powerful and lasting economics lessons, however, are likely to be those that involve experiential learning in which students are engaged in economic activities or decision making followed by debriefing discussions focusing on key concepts and principles (Laney, 2001; Laney & Schug, 1998). For example, primary-grade children may find it difficult and confusing to learn the concept of opportunity cost (defined as the next-best alternative that one gives up when making a decision) if it is taught as an abstract concept in isolation from other, related content. However, the same children relatively easily come to understand and appreciate the relevance and importance of the opportunity cost concept when engaged in a series of activities that call for them to make decisions

about allocating their time or money. During debriefing discussions of these experiences, the teacher leads them to see that economic decisions involve trade-offs—that when you allocate some of your time or money to one purpose, you simultaneously forego the opportunity to use it for a different purpose (ordinarily, the next best alternative). Appreciation of the opportunity cost concept will help them learn to approach economic decisions by considering not only the benefits but the costs of resource allocations (e.g., they can use part of their savings to buy a DVD today, but this will delay their opportunity to buy the bicycle for which they have been saving).

Economics Programs for the Elementary Grades

Most elementary school teachers do not have much formal economic knowledge (McKinney, McKinney, Larkins, Gilmore, & Ford, 1990), which makes it difficult for them to develop activities around sound content. It also leaves them susceptible to reliance on corporately produced materials that include questionable financial advice (Stanger, 1997). So, make sure that you acquire enough economic knowledge to create meaningful economic learning activities for your students.

Some economics educators advocate the use of technology as an instructional tool to facilitate students' construction of meanings and economic relationships. Highlighting an activity comparing population patterns with locations of corporate polluters, Lucey and Grant (2005) encouraged the use of the NTeQ instructional model (iNtegrating TEchnology for inQUIry) (Morrison, Lowther, & Demuelle, 1999) to foster students' collection and analysis of economic information and associated relationships. Such technology functions as more than glamorous tutors for students, by encouraging collaborative discourse that fosters both working understandings of technology and discovery of economic principles.

A well-established and successful program for teaching economics in Grades 3–6 is Mini-Society, an experiential learning program that teaches students basic economic concepts and principles along with related information about government, careers, consumer issues, and values (Kourilsky, 1983). The program is intended to be implemented three times a week for 10 weeks, so it would require 25 percent to 50 percent of the time allocated to social studies in most elementary classrooms. It involves creating a Mini-Society in the classroom based on market mechanisms. The society includes a name, a flag, a currency system, civil servants (e.g., paymasters who are paid to distribute money to individuals), and mechanisms for introducing money into circulation (by allowing “citizens” to earn money by meeting criteria of good citizenship or accomplishment). Students then can use the Mini-Society money to purchase items from classmates who have established businesses that offer goods or services. In addition to consumption, incentives for developing businesses that will enable the students to acquire money include the need to pay various taxes and fees levied to pay civil servants for their work, pay the teacher for needed supplies and consultant advice, and pay the principal rent for use of space.

Once several businesses begin and a thriving market economy develops, students have experiences (e.g., business successes and failures, conflict between partners, indecision about how much to charge for one's product or service) that provide grist for debriefing discussions, which are the main mechanism for highlighting and formalizing the concepts and principles taught in the program. Experiences followed by debriefing discussions are used to develop topics such as goods and services, supply and demand, advertising, keeping financial records, opportunity cost, cost-benefit analysis, shortages and the rationing function of price, and the function of banks. If the implementation incorporates the option of establishing a formal government, there also will be debriefings

on concepts such as democracy versus dictatorship, the branches of government and their functions, and legal contracts and their implications.

Mini-Society requires a considerable commitment of time, space, and teacher preparation (guided by a detailed manual that includes many duplicate masters). The program offers a great deal of excitement and enjoyment to students and provides them with a variety of experiences that can become valuable grist for learning economic concepts and principles. The degree to which their understanding is developed, however, will be determined heavily by the degree to which the teacher recognizes and exploits teachable moments and consistently leads the students through good debriefing discussions.

Laney (1997, 2001) provided a step-by-step example of good debriefing discussions. Students are confronted with a scarcity situation at school and then asked to describe it in detail in their own words and role-play it. Next, the students identify the central problem, and the teacher helps them to recognize that the existence of scarce resources is a relevant decision-making issue. Next, the teacher reviews the concepts needed for dealing with the problem. Students supply their own invented definition and label for the concept of scarcity, such as not-enough or too-few-for-so-many, and the teacher provides the conventional label and definition (e.g., scarcity occurs whenever wants exceed the available resources, which they usually do). Finally, the teacher guides the students in relating this new information to the current problem and to their own knowledge base and past experience. The students address the problem by brainstorming possible allocation strategies, discussing and role-playing positive and negative consequences of each strategy, selecting the one that appears best, implementing it, and living with the consequences.

Kourilsky (1992) also developed Kinder-Economy, an experience-based economics curriculum for Grades K–2. It also calls for students to experience situations that focus on real-world economic decision making and living with the consequences, but it does not involve creating a society, starting businesses, and the other more complicated aspects of Mini-Society. Students are asked to choose between two alternatives (e.g., which playground activity to participate in or which supplies to use in creating an art project), and they are then guided in using cost-benefit analysis to determine whether they made a good decision given their choice of alternatives.

Other economic materials worth noting are Small Size Economics and Children in the Marketplace. These are less ambitious and more conventional than Mini-Society, but are designed to teach many of the same concepts. Small-Size Economics (Skeel, 1988) includes 20 lessons, 10 for kindergarten or first grade (addressed within the contexts of self, family or school) and 10 for second or third grade (addressed within the contexts of neighborhood or community). Children in the Marketplace (National Council on Economic Education, 2005) is a series of eight lessons designed to teach basic economic principles to third and fourth graders. Each lesson is designed to provide opportunities for students to first hear about economics concepts and principles, then apply and experience them, then review them, and finally generalize their applications to concrete situations. Other resources include Storypath with integrated units, including Soup Company and Understanding the Place: the Toy Company and a Money Unit in Alleman and Brophy (2003b), *Social Studies Excursions*, Volume 3, pp. 123–208.

Financial Literacy

Financial literacy is an emerging economic topic garnering increasing educational interest. The Jump\$tart Coalition offers a set of personal finance standards to be met by Grades 4, 8, and 12 (www.jumpstartcoalition.com). However, the methods through which teachers implement these standards have strong bearing on their students' abilities to master financial skills. Activities that allow students to discover the meaning of financial

choices and their associated consequences are especially desirable as financial literacy learning opportunities.

How will you help students draw upon their own life experiences to understand economic principles? How will you deal with the fact that students in your class have different family economic situations?

Political Science: Civics and Government

Besides teaching content and skills, American schools traditionally have been expected to socialize each new generation, and the children of immigrants in particular, in American values and political traditions. These socialization goals are addressed not only through course content but through school rules, learning communities established within classrooms, patriotic pageants and holiday celebrations, mock votes and other election-related activities, student governments, current events discussions and special units, or events related to topics such as conflict resolution, law education, or celebrating diversity.

Within the academic curriculum, social studies bears special citizen education responsibilities. Along with knowledge and skills, this includes developing civic values (e.g., democracy, justice, equality before the law) and dispositions to action (e.g., voting and other forms of political participation). Social studies was conceived as a pan-disciplinary subject rather than merely a placeholder for courses in separate disciplines, primarily as a way to ensure that citizen education goals received sufficient attention.

Educating students for citizenship is challenging because it requires addressing some enduring dilemmas, most notably the challenge of socializing students to adopt American political values while simultaneously respecting cultural diversity, and the challenge of fostering dispositions toward active political participation without foisting your own partisan political views on your captive audience of students. Unfortunately, most textbooks and many teachers shy away from these challenges, seeking to avoid controversy. Consequently, scholars who study civic education in the schools frequently lament that there is not enough of it, and that what there is overemphasizes transmission of academic knowledge and traditional values at the expense of opportunities for students to discuss and debate social or civic policy issues, work on service learning projects, or obtain other opportunities for active political participation or experiential learning. They emphasize that partisanship can be avoided by focusing civic education around the core democratic values rooted in our Declaration of Independence, Constitution, and political traditions, and by engaging students in civic service or improvement projects that people of all political persuasions can support.

A federal law that took effect in 2005 requires teachers to teach about the U.S. Constitution, and many states require instruction relating to core democratic values. The latter guidelines usually feature the following 12 values: life, liberty, the pursuit of happiness, justice, the common good, equality, truth, diversity, popular sovereignty, patriotism, the rule of law, and individual rights. These core values can be defined at varying levels of sophistication for students at different grade levels. For example, justice can be defined for younger children as taking turns and being fair to others, but explained to older children in terms of treating people fairly in the eyes of the law without favoring

particular individuals or groups. Information about how the core democratic values can be defined and taught at different grade levels (including recommendations for correlated children's literature selections) can be found at the website of the Michigan Department of Education. For other ideas about teaching about Constitution Day, see constitutioncenter.org/ncc_progs_constitution_day.aspx

Some elementary teachers, especially primary teachers, also shy away from teaching about government because they believe their students are not interested in or ready for instruction in the topic. It is true that most elementary students will not respond well to macro aspects of the topic or to some of the drier traditional content, such as a lesson on how a bill becomes a law. However, even young children are interested in issues of fairness and justice (as can be seen when they learn about slavery or past restrictions on women's rights). We also have found them to be responsive to lessons on government that emphasize basic reasons for and functions of government (rather than abstract political science concepts or details of governmental procedures).

Children can understand that people need governments to provide essentials that are too big, complicated, or expensive for them to provide for themselves, such as keeping us safe (military, police, fire, hospitals) and enabling us to function in the modern world (schools, roads, traffic regulation). They also are interested to learn other basic ideas about government: governments collect taxes to pay for their activities; there is not always consensus on what government should be doing, which is why we have political parties and elections; and our country vests power in the people and elects its leaders, but other countries are ruled by monarchs who inherit the throne or by despots who forcibly seize power and maintain it through repression.

Children's Knowledge and Thinking about Government

More is known about children's thinking about government than about other major social studies topics. Earlier studies indicated that young children tend to depict a benevolent world in which political leaders are wise, caring, and attentive to the needs of everyone. American children's early political thinking is focused on the president, whom they depict as making laws and running the country by doing everything from managing the military and world affairs to providing individual assistance to people who telephone or visit the White House. They usually know little or nothing about Congress, the Supreme Court, federal departments and bureaucracies, or parallel governmental structures at the state and local level. Instead, they think of government as the actions of the president (and to a much lesser extent, the governor or the mayor), assisted by "helpers" who come to bring up issues or problems, receive decisions, and then carry out orders.

Because they think of government as benevolent and put their trust in it, children have difficulty conceiving or approving of pressure groups, parties, conflict, and so on. They are somewhat aware that big corporations influence government, but they usually do not think that rich people have any more influence than average people. They idealize elections, believing that candidates should not say unkind things about one another, that the loser should support the winner, and that the winner should be gracious and forgiving.

Although they occasionally refer to something quite specific (e.g., helping a person get a job), children's depictions of the president's actions are usually vague and generic. Initially they talk about the president signing papers, making speeches, or running meetings, and later they add functions such as making laws, running the country, or solving problems. Although their thinking about governmental leaders focuses on the president much more than the governor or mayor, their thinking about governmental functions is much more local (they talk about providing roads, schools, police and emergency services, and so on). They sometimes confuse the public and private sectors, as in thinking that all utility companies and television stations are part of the government or in not

realizing that mail carriers and most teachers do work for the government (Hess & Torney, 1967; Moore, Lare, & Wagner, 1985).

More recent studies have reinforced and extended these findings. They again indicate that children's thinking about government focuses on leaders and face-to-face commanding rather than hierarchies of offices and levels of government. Children generally emphasize either or both of two main ideas: government as a source of authority and power over people's actions and government as a benevolent resource that protects us, solves problems, and helps people in need. Most children are not very clear about who does what, but they share a general perception that the nation, state and/or local community are run by competent people who take actions as needed to protect the health, safety, and general welfare of the citizens. A few display naiveté in describing the extent of governmental benevolence or the motivations behind it (e.g., keep the streets clean to protect birds from choking), and a few others display resentment against governmental exercise of authority (e.g., enforcing eviction notices), but most speak matter-of-factly when describing the nature and functions of government.

About half of primary students know that the president is elected. Others assume that the vice president moves up or that the new president is appointed by the previous president or some committee of knowledgeable leaders, based on display of competency (making good decisions, giving good speeches) and virtue (works hard, keeps promises). They do not assume that the office is hereditary. Thus, even young children who do not yet know much about our form of government already have learned that our country is neither a monarchy nor a totalitarian state and have been conditioned to view it as a meritocracy. If asked to draw comparisons with kings and queens, children often depict monarchs as basking in the trappings of inherited luxury, while depicting presidents as working long hours for the good of the country during their limited time in office.

Most children convey a positive view of laws, depicting them as needed and helpful. However, their rationales tend to be limited to keeping us safe (traffic laws) or ensuring a well-ordered society and preventing chaos (laws against crimes). They rarely speak of laws as securing people's rights or making sure that they are treated fairly. They often are unsure about whether or how new laws might be introduced or older laws might be changed. When they are aware of particular laws, these tend to be laws regulating the behavior of individuals rather than commerce, corporations, or governmental processes, especially laws of special interest to children (focusing on bicycle safety, seatbelts, smoking, alcohol, drugs, or weapons).

Children are more aware of judges today than in the past because of the popularity of courtroom settings, both fictional and realistic, on television. They generally depict courtrooms in which the judge (rather than a jury) is the arbiter who decides which side wins the case and what subsequent actions will be taken. They depict judges as presiding over their courtrooms by banging their gavels, lecturing defendants about their behavior or questioning them about their motives, or questioning witnesses to clarify what they saw. If children mention other courtroom actors (e.g., juries, attorneys), they usually depict them as judges' advisors or helpers rather than as people with their own unique roles to play in deciding cases.

Children usually do not think or know much about where the money to pay for government comes from. If asked, younger children are likely to say that the government (and more specifically, the president or governor) gets money from banks or prints whatever money is needed. Later they begin to understand that money to pay for government comes from the people but are vague about how the process works. They may not know or use the term "taxes." Those who do may understand "taxes" as bills to be paid, but may confuse them with utility bills or house or car payments. Even those who

do understand that taxes are paid specifically to governments to fund governmental activities are usually only aware of sales taxes, not income or property taxes.

Most young students in public schools do not realize that their own school is provided by the local government and their teachers are paid using tax money. Many assume that the school is owned by the principal or some combination of people who work in the building, and that teachers are paid by the principal (using personal funds or money gotten from a bank) or their parents (via money paid for books and supplies) (Berti, 2005; Brophy & Alleman, 2005).

Finally, it is noteworthy that less than one-fourth of the students whom we interviewed said that they would like to be president when they grew up, and many of these were more focused on the prerequisites attached to the office than on opportunities to use its power for the good of the country. Despite the tendency of most of these students to attribute near-omnipotent power to the presidency, they also associated the office with long hours, daunting responsibilities, and “political stuff.” We need to do a better job of helping students appreciate the many services and functions that governments perform and socializing them to aspire to public service careers.

National Standards for Teaching about Civics and Government

The NCSS (2010) Curriculum Standards include two themes relating to civics and government, one focusing on knowledge and the other on values and dispositions. The first theme calls for experiences that provide for the study of how people create and change structures of *Power, Authority, and Governance*. In the early grades, such experiences allow students to examine the rights and responsibilities of the individual in relation to his or her social group, such as family, peer group, and school class; explain the purpose of government; give examples of how government does or does not provide for the needs and wants of people, establish order and security and manage conflict; recognize how groups and organizations encourage unity and deal with diversity to maintain order and security; distinguish among local, state, and national government and identify representative leaders at these levels, such as mayor, governor, and president; identify and describe factors that contribute to cooperation and cause disputes within and among groups and nations; explore the role of technology in communications, transportation, information-processing, weapons development, or other areas as it contributes to or helps resolve conflicts; and recognize and give examples of the tensions between the wants and needs of individuals and groups and concepts such as fairness, equity, and justice. In the middle grades, experiences related to this theme allow students to examine persistent issues involving the rights, roles, and status of the individual in relation to the general welfare; describe the purpose of government and how its powers are acquired, used, and justified; analyze and explain ideas and governmental mechanisms to meet the needs and wants of citizens, regulate territory, manage conflict, and establish order and security; describe the ways nations and organizations respond to forces of unity and diversity affecting order and security; identify and describe the basic features of the political system in the United States, and identify representative leaders from various levels and branches of the government; explain conditions, actions, and motivations that contribute to conflict and cooperation within and among nations; describe and analyze the role of technology in communications, transportation, information-processing, weapons development, or other areas as it contributes to or helps resolve conflicts; explain and apply concepts such as power, role, status, justice, and influence to the examination of persistent issues and social problems; and give examples and explain how governments attempt to achieve their stated ideals at home and abroad.

The second theme is *Civic Ideals and Practices*. It calls for experiences that provide for the study of the ideals, principles, and practices of citizenship in a democratic republic.

In the early grades such experiences allow students to identify key ideals of the United States' democratic republican form of government, such as individual human dignity, liberty, justice, equality and the rule of law, and discuss their application in specific situations; identify examples of rights and responsibilities of citizens; locate, access, organize, and apply information about an issue of public concern from multiple points of view; identify and practice selected forms of civic discussion and participation consistent with the ideals of citizens in a democratic republic; explain actions citizens can take to influence public policy decisions; recognize that a variety of formal and informal actors influence and shape public policy; examine the influence of public opinion on personal decision-making and government policy on public issues; explain how public policies and citizen behaviors may or may not reflect the stated ideals of a democratic republican form of government; describe how public policies are used to address issues of public concern; and recognize and interpret how the "common good" can be strengthened through various forms of citizen action. In the middle grades, activities that develop desired civic ideals and practices allow students to examine the origins and continuing influence of key ideals of the democratic republican form of government, such as individual human dignity, liberty, justice, equality, and the rule of law; identify and interpret sources and examples of the rights and responsibilities of citizens; locate, access, analyze, organize, and apply information about selected public issues—recognizing and explaining multiple points of view; practice forms of civic discussion and participation consistent with the ideals of citizens in a democratic republic; explain and analyze various forms of citizen action that influence public policy decisions; identify and explain the roles of formal and informal political actors in influencing and shaping public policy and decision making; analyze the influence of diverse forms of public opinion on the development of public policy and decision making; analyze the effectiveness of selected public policies and citizen behaviors in realizing the stated ideals of a democratic republican form of government; explain the relationship between policy statements and action plans used to address issues of public concern; and examine strategies designed to strengthen the "common good" which consider a range of options for citizen action.

The Center for Civic Education (2010) also has developed standards for teaching about civics and government. They are organized around the following five questions: (1) What is government and what should it do? (2) What are the basic values and principles of American democracy? (3) How does the government, established by the Constitution, embody the purposes, values, and principles of American democracy? (4) What is the relationship of the United States to other nations and to world affairs? (5) What are the roles of the citizen in American democracy? (Center for Civic Education, 2010). Like the NCSS standards, these standards also address both knowledge/skills and values/dispositions, and are differentiated between the early and the middle grades.

Teaching about Civics and Government

To help students understand why governments are needed and what they do for their people, we recommend developing instruction around the basic idea that governments provide facilities and services that people need but are too big in scope, expense, and so on for individuals or families to provide for themselves. These include national defense and the armed forces; roads, airports, and transportation infrastructure; education from pre-kindergarten through university levels; the criminal justice system; police protection and emergency services; parks and recreation facilities; the postal service; standards and regulations regarding product quality and safety; safety net services for people with special needs; and so on. The tax money that is collected to pay for these services supports the common good.

An effective way to develop such appreciation is to prepare a photo essay illustrating events occurring in a typical day in the life of one of the students in the class and underscoring the role of government in facilitating these activities. For example, the photos might depict the child getting up in the morning wearing fire-resistant pajamas (per government regulations); washing using purified running water supplied by local government; changing into clothes inspected for quality and safety; eating a breakfast consisting of foods inspected for quality and safety; boarding a safety-inspected, government-provided bus driven by a licensed driver; traveling to school on government-maintained roads patrolled by the local police force; attending school in a government-owned building; participating in learning activities using government-supplied materials assisted by government-supplied teachers; and so on.

Initial ideas about alternative forms of government can be developed by contrasting our system of representative democracy (leaders are elected to limited terms and must act within constitutional guidelines) with systems in which leaders ascend to power through other means (inheritance, military power), hold office indefinitely, and exercise totalitarian power. Contrasts can be brought home through discussion or simulation of what it is like to live in countries where there are no elections or at least no secret ballots, where access to desired housing and jobs requires continued government approval, and where people who resist government policies are subject to arrest.

Some of the details of how our system works are best addressed around election times via study of the issues and the reasons why different stakeholders would prefer one candidate or policy over another. Also, using examples easily understood by children, instruction can help students learn that debates about laws or policies often focus on means-ends relationships and trade-offs rather than ultimate purposes (e.g., people who agree with the ultimate purpose of a proposed law or policy might nevertheless oppose it because they do not believe that it will accomplish the purpose or that whatever good it accomplishes will not be worth the costs in higher taxes or new restrictions on individual freedoms).

Lesson plans and children's literature resources on the presidency are plentiful but often focus on the trivial and stop well short of genuine civic education. Such lessons produce outcomes like the one reported by Haas (2004): A middle school student who had completed a report on President Reagan recalled three facts: Reagan was called "the Gipper;" he had a sense of humor; and he loved jellybeans. Children can and should learn much more substantive information about the presidency and about the major policies and initiatives of any individual presidents they study. For ideas focusing on teaching about the presidency and presidential elections, see the Haas (2004) article, McGuire's (1997) book, or websites established for introducing students to government and the electoral process.

During election years, the Kids Voting website (kidsvotingusa.org) is useful. It offers a program for students that provides information about registering to vote, the role of political parties in elections, and how to organize information for making voting decisions (through reading newspapers, analyzing political advertisements, and following debates about campaign issues). It concludes with a mock election held on the same day as the general election. Evaluation of the program indicated that it energizes students' interest in elections and increases their communication with parents about politics, their use of political media such as newspapers in the home, and their general knowledge about elections, with especially noteworthy effects on students from lower socioeconomic status families (McDevitt & Chaffee, 2000).

Key to successful civic and political education is thoughtful discussion of civic issues within an open classroom climate. Instruction in civic content increases students' civic knowledge, but by itself it usually has negligible effects on student attitudes related to eventual civic and political participation. However, both sets of outcomes are likely

when students report frequently discussing issues, hearing and exploring alternative views, and feeling comfortable expressing their own opinions because the teacher maintains a classroom atmosphere that supports this kind of thoughtful discourse (Torney-Purta, Hahn, & Amadeo, 2001).

Teachers can convey basic information about taxes and address likely confusion of taxes and utility bills by sharing and leading discussions about their own personal documents. Most of the students will be familiar with sales taxes at some level, but showing the amounts added to the purchase price as listed on store receipts will help bring home the fact that sales taxes are attached to most purchases and provide a sense of the relative amounts involved. Similarly, sharing property assessments and local tax bills will help students understand how local governments raise money for schools and community services. Support of the federal (and if relevant, the state) government through income taxes can be made concrete by showing paycheck statements indicating that employers keep track of the taxes that their employees owe and deduct this money from gross pay to send to the government.

Once the students have developed some basic knowledge about common forms of taxation, where tax money is sent, and what is done with it, teachers can share utility bills and lead discussion of what is being purchased from utility companies, how it is used, and how the companies keep track of what customers owe them. Class discussion would be followed up with home assignments calling for students to interact with their parents in locating and observing the meters that measure water, gas, and electricity usage, as well as inspecting and discussing tax bills, utility bills, store receipts, and related documents.

Instruction about the civic aspects of government might begin with emphasis that students are members of a classroom community as well as a larger community that incorporates their homes and businesses. As members of the classroom learning community, they are expected to follow rules designed to help people get along, keep things fair, protect individual and school property, and keep people safe. The larger community has laws for similar reasons. Political office holders make sure that life in the community allows people to carry out their daily activities in a safe and orderly environment. Students might be introduced to local leaders through guest speakers who visit the classroom, field trips to government offices, or studying photos and listening to recorded interviews.

The students might learn that the community leaders have three basic jobs: make plans and laws, solve problems, and make the community a pleasant place to live. Legislators make the laws that need to be followed by everyone. Some laws protect people's rights, some protect property (e.g., zoning ordinances), some protect health (e.g., pollution ordinances), and some promote safety (e.g., speed limits).

Laws help guide our lives and remind us of our responsibilities toward other people. They are enforced by police and judges who are part of local government, but they are intended to make the community a better place, not merely to limit individuals' behavior. To make this concrete, students might discuss why particular laws exist (e.g., considering what would happen if people drove at any speed they wanted and ignored stop signs). Once students have developed a basic understanding of and appreciation for local government, they are ready for lessons on state and national government, on voting and other aspects of responsible citizenship, and comparisons of different forms of government.

Finally, the learning might include encouragement of and opportunities for practicing good citizenship. Some of these might involve government (e.g., writing to appropriate government leaders to suggest new laws or express a position on a current issue). Others might involve *service learning* (e.g., participation in anti-litter, recycling, or other volun-

teer activities), rationalized with the explanation that governments cannot be expected to do everything and good citizens contribute to the common good as individuals. For a unit on government that incorporates these and other basic ideas, see Alleman and Brophy (2003b).

How will you make civic ideals and practices meaningful and relevant to students' lives? How will the way you manage your classroom reflect principles of justice and liberty?

Embedding Social Science Content within Global and Multicultural Perspectives

Social studies is a pan-disciplinary school subject that bears special responsibility for socializing students to fulfill their roles as citizens in a democratic republic. Much of this involves learning about the history and geography of the United States as well as its people. As the NCSS (2010, p. 3) put it, however, “the primary purpose of social studies is to help young people develop the ability to make informed and reasoned decisions for the public good as citizens of a culturally diverse, democratic society in an interdependent world.” The approach that we recommend calls for infusing global and multicultural perspectives throughout your teaching rather than planning special units that address global or multicultural topics but otherwise walling them off from the rest of the curriculum.

An ongoing source of concern to many social educators is that the “culturally diverse” and “interdependent world” aspects of this statement often do not receive the attention they deserve. This has led to calls for more attention to diversity as well as the development of curricular models featuring global and multicultural education. For in-depth treatment of these instructional models and the curricula and learning activities associated with them, see Banks (2005) and Nieto (2004).

The big ideas emphasized by the foundational disciplines of social studies point toward the same conclusion (e.g., analyzing events within the context of the time, place, and political structure in which they occur, portraying a culture from an insider’s perspective, and fostering empathy while avoiding presentism and chauvinism). You can accomplish these basics most naturally by routinely embedding social studies content within a global purview (and where relevant, addressing the causes and consequences of events with reference to the world at large, not just the United States, and helping students notice and appreciate the significance of current events occurring all around the world), as well as analyzing them with attention to multiple perspectives, including the beliefs and traditions associated with those perspectives. Recent events in our increasingly connected and interdependent world underscore the need for global awareness and a multicultural perspective. Far too many Americans are ignorant about other people and places (not only where they are located but their needs, interests, priorities, concerns, and cultures generally).

Another fundamental principle to emphasize is capitalizing on the diversity that exists within your own classroom by connecting with your students’ families and using them as resources for creating authentic learning experiences relating to global and multicultural

issues. Whatever you are teaching about in social studies at any given time, it is likely that at least some of your students' families are connected to the topic in some way. Capitalizing on these connections allows you to personalize what otherwise might be an abstract learning experience for many students, and in the process promote appreciation for cultural diversity and encourage conversations about school-related topics between students and family members.

How will the instructional materials and activities in your classrooms reflect diverse perspectives? How will you involve students' families in class activities about cultural diversity?

Technology Tips

Digital Age: Technology-Based K–12 Lesson Plan for Social Studies (Bennett & Berson, 2007) is a great resource for technology-based lesson ideas. Consider the following resources for teaching political science: www.kidsvotingusa.org and bensguide.gpo.gov/. For ideas about teaching economics, see www.storyofstuff.com/, www.econedlink.org/, and the computer game, SimCity. As we have cautioned previously, carefully evaluate resources for accuracy, clarity, and cultural sensitivity before using them in your teaching.

Summary

This chapter addresses elementary social studies applications of content drawn from psychology, sociology, economics, and civics and government (political science). Psychological content as such appears primarily in kindergarten and first grade, in lessons about oneself and one's social relationships. However, it is helpful to bear in mind that young children tend to take a psychological/narrative perspective on social studies content rather than a social science/analytic perspective. Also, supporting the development of positive personal identities is part of the rationale for the mutual respect and appreciation of diversity aspects of creating a learning community.

Sociology content is emphasized in studies of neighborhoods and communities as well as in content dealing with social status and associated roles studied in lessons on history or cultures. Elementary teachers have many opportunities to sharpen students' awareness of their social involvements and the trade-offs associated with them. Children are very interested in issues surrounding fairness and justice, which makes

them very interested in social studies content dealing with past or present inequities related to gender, race, ethnicity, or other status characteristics.

Economics addresses decision making about all kinds of resources, not just money. Elementary students can learn many of its most basic concepts experientially through activities calling for them to make decisions about how to spend their time or money. Although they often have personal experience in saving for and buying toys, most children do not know much and often harbor misconceptions about even basic economic aspects of society (e.g., business transactions and profits, banking operations, home financing, credit cards, the effect of supply and demand on prices). Economists have done a good job of identifying the most basic economic concepts and principles and developing experiential learning programs for use in the elementary grades.

Elementary social studies features considerable content relating to civics and government, although it does not teach political science as such. Basic appreciation

about the need for rules to regulate social interactions are developed as part of establishing a classroom learning community. Subsequently, an emphasis on core democratic values should pervade all social studies teaching (not just lessons on civics and government). Focusing on these values and the knowledge content associated with them will help you address potentially controversial content authentically while avoiding either an overly celebratory or an overly critical treatment of American political traditions. Given the divisiveness and polarization that has characterized the nation's political climate in recent years, we would emphasize two key goals in teaching about civics and government: developing appreciation of why governments are needed and the kinds of resources and services they provide for

people, and emphasizing the importance of serving the common good and accomplishing as much as possible for as many as possible (rather than winning or losing battles) as basic orientations to politics.

Finally, the primary purposes and goals of social studies imply that discipline-based content ought to be embedded within global and multicultural perspectives. This includes analyzing events within the context of the time, place, and political structure in which they occur, portraying cultures from an insider's perspective, and fostering empathy while avoiding presentism and chauvinism. Students should learn to notice and appreciate the significance of events occurring all around the world (not just in the United States) and to analyze them with attention to multiple perspectives.

Reflective Questions

1. How does developing content in the social science disciplines link to the goal of preparing students for their life roles?
2. How can a novice teacher include the social sciences within units of instruction (that go beyond the textbook) without becoming overwhelmed?
3. If you were to expand your social studies program by addressing psychology, sociology, economics, and political science described in this chapter, how would you prioritize them at your current or preferred grade level? Why?
4. Economics traditionally has been minimized in the elementary grades. Why? What can you do in your classroom to overcome this mindset?
5. Imagine you have been charged with embedding psychology, sociology, economics, and political science within a global and multicultural perspective. Identify a unit you will teach in your classroom. What would you add? Delete? What would be the ideal results?

Your Turn: Applying Social Science Concepts within Your Learning Community

Our hope is that you have already accomplished a lot toward the development of your learning community—if you have your own classroom. (If you are at the stage of observing or interning, begin by putting your plans on paper.) You can help your students see the connections between life in your classroom (a microcosm of society) and what goes on in other places by leveraging content associated with psychology, sociology, economics, and political science and making it more explicit. Authentic representations will make the content more meaningful and memorable.

We encourage you to review this chapter and list the key concepts and big ideas associated with each of

the four disciplines. Then prepare a matrix describing how each applies to your learning community; add questions to be discussed in your class meetings that will stimulate conversation and critique associated with each; and list possible unit infusions.

The matrix (shown next) is intended as a planning tool. The general rule is that less is more; therefore, think about natural places for inclusion rather than attempt to infuse big ideas from each of the disciplines in every unit. Also, think about natural occasions for doing some foreshadowing, knowing that big ideas from a specific discipline will be emphasized in an upcoming unit.

NCSS Themes

IV. INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT AND IDENTITY

Social Science Discipline	Learning Community	Optimum places in my unit plans where these powerful ideas will fit
[Psychology] Micro-level Psychological Terms	Use TWL as an introduction to units in order to figure out what students think they know based on the experiences they have had.	As I begin my unit on local government, I will ask my students what they think they know about government. I will record their responses on a large sheet of paper. I will use it as a daily reference as I plan and enact the lessons in an attempt to shift or enhance their thinking. I will address their misconceptions when appropriate.
Personal Identity	Promote conversations within the learning community that address the individual (e.g., What do you want to do? Why?). Move toward questions that guide students into acknowledging and respecting others—and making decisions accordingly.	
Self-efficacy	Promote conversations and learning community activities that foster “I can contribute,” “I can make a difference for my class.”	

V. INDIVIDUALS, GROUPS, AND INSTITUTIONS

Social Science Discipline	Learning Community	Optimum places in my unit plans where these big ideas will fit
[Sociology] Institutions, Roles, Expectations	Discuss the school as an institution and within the classroom, focus on ideas that students have individual and group roles to play and expectations to meet. They have committee member responsibilities as well as individual subject matter assignments. Similarly, out of school they participate in institutions such as church, scouts and gymnastics. They have roles and expectations to meet. The challenge is to balance them with those they have within their classroom. Sometimes they seem to conflict.	As I assign committee members to certain tasks, we will discuss roles and expectations. We will create job charts and talk about how we will know when we have met our expectations as they relate to committee assignment and responsibilities.

VI. POWER, AUTHORITY, AND GOVERNANCE

Social Science Discipline	Learning Community	Optimum places in my unit plans where these big ideas will fit
[Political Science] Common good	I will introduce this core democratic value when we discuss our community service project.	During our unit on local government, I will prepare an interactive story-type lesson and explain that our core democratic values were created as part of the founding and establishment of our country. I will briefly introduce the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution. As the unit unfolds, we will look for places in our surroundings where the common good is being enacted.

VII. PRODUCTION, DISTRIBUTION, AND CONSUMPTION

Social Science Discipline	Learning Community	Optimum places in my unit plans where these big ideas will fit
[Economics] Opportunity cost	When we are making class decisions such as what to do/eat at our next class party, what to present at family night, or what community service project we would pursue, I will introduce opportunity cost—and explain that when you make choices, there are trade-offs. You always give up something.	This will fit nicely with our upcoming unit on money. We will address opportunity cost when we discuss personal budgeting. I will present several scenarios, and then students will be asked to do some budgeting and explain their examples of opportunity cost.



HOW CAN I USE DISCOURSE POWERFULLY?

Tim Moon, Second-Year Teacher

When I reflect on my first year teaching fifth-grade, what I believe my students enjoyed the most were our classroom debates and discussions. I remember going through teacher preparation classes and participating in all activities, thinking to myself “What does this have to do with how I will teach my own lessons? How can discussion benefit my students and aid them in constructing new knowledge and skills?”

Well, as a first-year teacher I stepped up to that plate and decided that my classroom would be a place where the teacher’s voice was not dominant in classroom discourse; instead, the students would play an active role. I thought a classroom debate would be a great way to get some discussion going in my classroom. During debates, I let the students pick their side and we set some simple ground rules in order to make the debate go smoothly; we even had a stuffed monkey that we tossed from one side to the other and whoever had the monkey was the only person who was allowed to speak. After a lengthy period of time of preparing for the debate and about thirty minutes of set-up time, all I learned after that first debate was that my students were masters at yelling at one another and that they needed some serious help learning how to communicate their thoughts about social studies.

As a class we began working together to learn about how to debate and have meaningful conversation with each other. We worked on the language we should use to disagree with someone and how to interpret or challenge information from the text and how to use it in our debates. As time went on I started to see

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a radical change in my students' attention spans, participation, and knowledge base. They started to have meaningful conversations with each other and they began to dig into important issues such as slavery and women's rights.

After reading this chapter, I am reminded that students construct knowledge in unique ways as they develop social studies understandings. I realized how important establishing productive discourse in my classroom is for students to construct knowledge actively. Teaching for thoughtfulness means teaching fewer topics, but in more in-depth ways.

At the end of the year my students became skillful discussants, and when I walked into the classroom the question I was greeted with every week was, "Mr. Moore, when is our next discussion? When is our next debate? What is it about?"

The National Council for the Social Studies (2010, p. 9) makes the following argument: "Young people who are knowledgeable, skillful and committed to democracy are necessary to sustaining and improving our democratic way of life, and participating as members of a global community." The NCSS states that classrooms should be "laboratories of democracy" for students to develop knowledge, skills, and attitudes. In such laboratories, discourse among the teacher and students is needed for students to develop effective communication skills. Students need to learn to listen to others with an open mind, ask questions for clarification, and offer their perspectives backed with evidence, logic, or research—in general, engage in a civil exchange of ideas that can lead to new understandings, new perspectives, or new solutions to problems. We believe social studies classrooms that promote discourse of this kind will help students become committed and capable citizens.

Contemporary models of effective teaching and learning emphasize the role of the student as well as the role of the teacher. In Chapter 3, we noted that the following principles have emerged from research on teaching for understanding: The student's role is not just to absorb or copy information but to actively make sense and construct meaning; activities and assignments feature tasks that call for problem solving or critical thinking, not just memory or reproduction; and the teacher creates a social environment in the classroom that could be described as a learning community, featuring discourse or dialogue designed to promote understanding. In Chapter 3 we also summarized the implications of the NCSS (2010) position statement that depicts social studies teaching and learning as powerful when it is meaningful, integrative, value-based, challenging, and active. All five of these qualities, but especially the latter two, emphasize the need for active student engagement in knowledge construction, particularly through reflective teacher-student and student-student discourse. This chapter describes how students actively construct knowledge, how effective classroom discourse can help students construct such knowledge, and recommends procedures for creating a classroom environment supportive of effective classroom discourse.

*Recall discourse in your elementary social studies classrooms.
What did it look and sound like? Who did most of the
talking? Was student-to-student interaction
encouraged or stifled? Were there whole and small
group discussions of topics and issues?*

What Do We Mean by Discourse and Discussion?

Although people use the terms discourse and discussion in different ways (often depending on the subject matter), we provide some broadly conceptualized definitions, particularly in terms of their application to social studies education. Note that, when relevant, we sometimes use discourse and discussion interchangeably.

Discourse, simply put, is written or oral communication. Classroom discourse comes in many forms: informal or formal, written or oral, one-way or two-way, small group or whole class, among others. Discourse involves the exchange of ideas through writing or through conversation. Discourse can be a student's entry in a journal and a teacher's response, written signs or posters displayed in the classroom, a teacher's directions for a class activity, a newsletter to families, or whole or small class dialogue about a public issue. Discourse is not just the words or language exchanged; it also involves the tone of language (in other words, "how you say it" as well as "what you say.")

Discussion is a particular kind of classroom discourse, characterized by the fact that it is oral and involves a sustained exchange of ideas among several participants. Discussion involves students talking with and responding to one another and with the teacher. Discussions in social studies classrooms should emphasize the specific skills and values needed by citizens in a democracy. Social studies discussions involve exchanges in which students do the following: offer their opinions on issues, supported with evidence, logic, or personal experience, agree or disagree with one another, listen to opposing viewpoints, and sometimes change their minds. Diana Hess (2009, p. 14), who has written extensively on discussion in social studies classrooms, specifies some common, agreed-upon features of discussion: (1) it is a dialogue among participants; (2) it leads to new knowledge or understandings as participants express their opinions and listen to those of others; and (3) it takes different forms and serves different purposes. For example, debate is one form of discussion. See Chapter 10.

The NCSS Standards for Civic Discourse



The NCSS Curriculum Standards indicate discussion as a criterion for good citizenship. The Introduction to the Standards states: "...the experiences students have in their social studies classrooms should enable learners to engage in civic discourse and problem-solving, and to take informed civic action" (NCSS, 2010, p. 12). One of the 10 themes is *Civic Ideals and Practices*. This theme refers to the many "processes" related to discussion (e.g., a high school process is "to participate in the process of persuading, compromising, debating, and negotiation in the resolution of conflicts and differences" (NCSS, 2010, p. 64). Another "essential social studies skill and strategy" for all grade levels is "dialogue with others who have different perspectives" (NCSS, 2010, p. 166).

Knowledge Construction

Effective discourse involves students actively constructing knowledge through dialogue with each other and the teacher. Constructivists believe that students learn by making connections between new information and existing networks of prior knowledge. They emphasize the importance of relating new content to knowledge that students already possess, as well as providing opportunities for students to process and apply the new



Thoughtful Discourse

Principle 6: Thoughtful Discourse: Questions are Planned to Engage Students in Sustained Discourse Structured Around Powerful Ideas. Research shows that effective teachers structure a great deal of content-based discourse in their classrooms. Teachers pose broad, open-ended questions designed to spark conversation rather than close-ended questions which tend to close discussion. Please see Chapter 14 for a more in-depth description of this principle.

learning using discourse. Before knowledge becomes truly generative—usable for interpreting new situations, reasoning, or solving problems—students must elaborate and question the new content, examine it in relation to more familiar content, and build new knowledge structures (Resnick & Klopfer, 1989). Otherwise, the knowledge may remain inert—recallable when cued by questions or test items like the ones used in practice exercises, but not accessible when it might be useful in everyday living.

Active Construction of Meaning

The core idea of constructivism is that students develop new knowledge through a process of active construction. They do not merely passively receive or copy information from teachers or textbooks. Instead, they actively mediate it by trying to make sense of it and relate it to what they already know (or think they know) about the topic. Each student builds his or her unique representation of what was communicated, and this may or may not include a complete and accurate reconstruction of what the teacher or textbook author intended to convey. Sometimes the learning is incomplete or distorted, while other times the learning goes beyond the teacher's expectations due to a student's experiences.

Even when the basic message is reconstructed as intended, different learners construct different sets of meanings and implications of “the same” set of ideas. For example, after reading about a group of citizens in a community who worked together to make improvements to their local park, one student might remember and think about the text as primarily a story about citizens working together to make change; another as a story about the services local government provides; and yet another as an illustration of the relationship between humans and the environment. The students all read the same text and their reconstructions all include the same basic story line, but they emphasize different meanings and implications.

Students routinely draw on their prior knowledge as they attempt to make sense of what they are learning. Accurate prior knowledge facilitates learning and provides a natural starting place for instruction, but inaccurate prior knowledge can distort learning. If new content gets connected to existing ideas that are oversimplified, distorted, or otherwise invalid, students may develop misconceptions instead of the target conceptions that the teacher is trying to teach. For example, students learning about U.S. history for the first time often overgeneralize what they learn about Jamestown, so that they come to think of colonies as very small villages surrounded by wooden stockades. Most of these students later expand their concept of “colony” as they learn about events that occurred between 1607 and 1776. Some of them do not, however, so that they retain their original “Jamestown” image of a colony even when they begin studying the American Revolution.

As a result, these students may emerge from fifth grade with misconceptions about the colonies and their role in the Revolutionary War.

Conceptual Change

Besides adding new elements to a child's existing cognitive structure, active construction of knowledge may involve changing that structure through processes of restructuring and conceptual change. Sometimes the needed restructuring is relatively minor and easily accomplished, but sometimes students need to undergo more radical restructuring that involves simultaneous changes in large networks of connected knowledge (Chinn & Brewer, 1993).

Merely exposing students to correct ideas will not necessarily stimulate needed restructuring, because the students may activate longstanding and firmly believed misconceptions that cause them to ignore, distort, or miss the implications of aspects of the new learning that contradict these powerful misconceptions (Kendeau & van den Broek, 2005). It may be necessary first to help students to see the contradictions between what they currently believe and what you are trying to teach, and then to appreciate that the target ideas are more valid, powerful, or useful than their existing concepts. Drawing out students' ideas during whole-class lessons and engaging them in pair or small-group discussions are two ways to help students to recognize and correct their misconceptions.

Social constructivists emphasize teaching that features *sustained dialogue* or discussion in which participants pursue a topic in depth, exchanging views and negotiating meanings and implications as they explore the topic's ramifications. Along with teacher-structured whole-class discussions, this includes cooperative learning that is constructed as students work in pairs or small groups.

The key features of a *social constructivist view* are as follows (Good & Brophy, 2003):

1. Knowledge is treated as a body of developing interpretations co-constructed through discussion.
2. Authority for constructed knowledge is viewed as residing in the arguments and evidence cited in its support (by students as well as by texts or teachers, so that everyone has expertise to contribute).
3. Teachers and students share responsibility for initiating and guiding learning efforts.
4. Teachers act as discussion leaders who pose questions, seek clarifications, promote dialogue, and help the group recognize areas of consensus and of continuing disagreement.
5. Students strive to make sense of new input by relating it to their prior knowledge and by collaborating in dialogue with others to co-construct shared understandings.
6. Discourse emphasizes reflective discussion of networks of knowledge, so that the focus is on eliciting students' thinking through questions that are divergent but designed to develop understanding of the powerful ideas that anchor each network.
7. Activities emphasize applications to authentic issues and problems that require higher-order thinking.
8. Students collaborate by acting as a learning community that constructs shared understandings through sustained dialogue.

Discourse that draws upon these eight key features can lead to powerful learning.

The Need to Build a Content Base

Teaching content-rich subjects such as social studies and science is especially challenging in the early grades as well as in multicultural classrooms or in settings where there is a wide range of achievement levels. In the first place, although students almost

always have at least some experiential base to bring to bear, their prior knowledge about topics addressed in these subjects is often very limited. Furthermore, this limited knowledge base is mostly tacit (not organized or verbally articulated, and perhaps never even consciously considered), and it often includes many misconceptions. Consequently, primary-grade teachers and upper-grade teachers who have very diverse classrooms often are faced with the task of helping their students to develop and begin to integrate an initial knowledge base in the domain. This requires taking little or nothing for granted, teaching (in some respects) as if the students know nothing at all about the topic.

In these situations, teachers usually have to assume most of the burden of conveying new information to their students. They cannot rely on texts for this purpose because kindergarten and first-grade students cannot yet read informational texts fluently, and many older students have not yet acquired a critical mass of reading fluency and study skills that would allow them to learn efficiently from reading. So, most of the content that you believe is important for your students to learn will have to be conveyed by yourself personally during lessons. You may use books, photos, physical artifacts, or other instructional resources in the process, but your students' initial exposure to new information will come mostly from listening to what you say during teacher-led classroom discourse. Consider setting the stage for guiding the listening by providing questions to promote students' thinking.

You will need to work within certain constraints as you construct and manage this discourse. Your students' attention spans are limited, and they are not yet able to retain lengthy and complicated explanations, so extended lecturing is not a feasible teaching method. Also, these students do not yet possess a critical mass of cognitive development and domain-specific knowledge that would enable them to comprehend and use the disciplinary content structures and associated discourse genres that are used in teaching subjects at relatively abstract and advanced levels. For example, they have experiences with money and personal economic exchanges, but know nothing of macroeconomics; they can comprehend basic ideas about rules, laws, and authority, but not about comparative governmental structures or other advanced aspects of political science; and they can understand stories about everyday life and key events in the past, but not abstract analyses of macro-level historical trends.

It is just as important for younger students as for older ones to offer curricula featuring networks of knowledge structured around big ideas, but you cannot do this through lengthy presentations of content organized as systematic explication of concepts, principles, logical arguments, or other advanced disciplinary structures that young students are not yet prepared to understand and use. Instead, you need to stick to aspects of a domain that can be made meaningful to students because they can be connected to the students' existing knowledge, and especially to their prior experiences. In addition, it helps to convey this content using text structures and discourse genres with which the students already have some familiarity (and preferably, some fluency).

Narrative Structures as Teaching Tools

One particularly useful tool that meets these criteria is the narrative structure because even the youngest students are already familiar with it through exposure to stories. Bruner (1990), Egan (1988, 1990), Downey and Levstik (1991), and others have noted that even very young children are familiar with and adept at using *narrative modes of thinking* for describing and remembering things that are important to them. That is,

they formulate and remember in story form. The stories are built around one or a small group of central figures and include attention to their goals, strategies undertaken to accomplish those goals (often involving solving problems or overcoming obstacles in the process), and the outcomes of these actions for the central figures and others in the story. The narrative format provides a natural way to remember a great many of the details used to fill out the story, organized within the goal-strategy-outcome “story grammar.”

This makes the narrative format a powerful vehicle for teachers to use in helping students bridge the familiar to the less familiar. Children can understand information about long ago and far away when the information is represented as stories of people pursuing goals that the students have done themselves, can be shown, or can be helped to imagine. Just as children can understand fictional creatures (e.g., *Hobbits*) and worlds (e.g., *Harry Potter's*) conveyed through narrative formats, they can understand stories about life in the past or in other cultures, so long as the depicted events lie within their own experiences or imagined based on those experiences.

Many aspects of elementary social studies are amenable to representation within narrative structures, especially those that involve human actions that occur in steps, stages, or series of events unfolding over time. History is the most obvious example. Although it has its abstract and analytic aspects, much of history involves reconstructing stories of specific events (e.g., the American Revolution) or changes over time (e.g., in modes of transportation). Studies of children's historical learning indicate that much of what they retain about history is organized within narrative structures, usually compressions of larger trends into stories that focus around goal-oriented activities or conflicts involving a few key figures (Barton & Levstik, 2004; Brophy & VanSledright, 1997). They tend to think of the American Revolution, for example, as a fight between King George of England and George Washington and other Americans who resented his taxes and unfair treatment, not as a protracted and multi-faceted conflict between a sovereign nation and a federation of colonies about to become a nation.

Elementary-grade children may be limited in their ability to understand the geopolitical aspects of the past, but they can understand wars as stories of attempts to gain control over land or other resources, voyages of discovery as attempts to satisfy curiosity and acquire riches, immigration as attempts to escape oppression or exploit economic opportunities, and so on. Most historical events and trends involved people engaged in goal-oriented behavior, and thus can be conveyed using narrative formats.

Although it is less commonly recognized, narrative formats also are well suited to conveying information about many of the geographical and social science aspects of social studies, especially those involving human actions related to cultural universals. To teach about societies and cultures, whether past or present, teachers can construct narratives explaining how the people meet their basic needs for food, clothing, and shelter within the affordances and constraints of local climate and natural resources, how they communicate and travel locally and across longer distances, and how they act both individually (or as families) and collectively (through their governments) to meet needs and pursue agendas.

These stories will provide frequent opportunities to introduce basic concepts and principles of geography, economics, political science, sociology, and anthropology. Because they focus on humans engaged in goal-oriented behavior, they also provide frequent opportunities to explore causal relationships and make explicit the human intentions and economic or political processes that underlie and explain human behavior but often go unrecognized and thus unappreciated by children. Stories about how key inventions made qualitative changes in people's lives, about why Americans eat relatively more

wheat and beef but the Japanese eat relatively more rice and fish, or about the land-to-hand processes and occupations involved in producing common foods and fabrics and bringing them to our stores all incorporate process explanations (of how and why things are done as they are and how products are developed) and cause-effect linkages (explaining why things are done the way they are and why they change in response to inventions).

This approach also offers two important bonuses. One is that, precisely because the stories focus on people taking actions to meet basic needs and pursue common wants, students are likely to view their content as interesting and relevant, and such a content base leads to follow-up activities and assignments that are authentic because they involve applications to life outside of school. Second, when the stories deal with life in the past or in other cultures, teachers can convey them in ways that help their students to see the time, place, and situation through the eyes of the people under study, and thus to see their decisions and actions as understandable given the knowledge and resources available to them. This helps to counteract children's tendencies toward presentism when thinking about the past and chauvinism when thinking about other cultures.

Teaching for Thoughtfulness

Important social education goals such as helping students see the time, place, and situation through the eyes of people under study require engaging them in higher-order thinking and teaching for thoughtfulness. Newmann and his colleagues (Newmann, 1990; Onosko, 1990) described teaching for thoughtfulness as challenging students to interpret, analyze, or manipulate information in response to a question or problem that cannot be resolved through routine application of previously acquired knowledge. They identified six key indicators of thoughtfulness based on their studies in high school social studies classes. These indicators can serve as important guidelines for elementary teachers as well, provided that students are adequately prepared to engage in carefully structured discourse.

1. Classroom discourse focuses on sustained examination of a few topics rather than superficial coverage of many.
2. The discourse is characterized by substantive coherence and continuity.
3. Students are given sufficient time to think before being required to answer questions.
4. The teacher presses students to clarify or justify their assertions, rather than accepting and reinforcing them indiscriminately.
5. The teacher models the characteristics of a thoughtful person (showing interest in students' ideas and suggestions for solving problems, modeling problem-solving processes rather than just giving answers, acknowledging the difficulties involved in gaining clear understandings of problematic topics).
6. Students generate original and unconventional ideas in the course of the interaction.

Thoughtfulness scores based on these indicators distinguish classrooms that feature sustained and thoughtful teacher-student discourse about the content from two types of less desirable classrooms: classrooms that feature lecture, recitation, and seatwork focused on low-level aspects of the content, and classrooms that feature discussion and student participation but do not foster much thoughtfulness because the teachers skip from topic to topic too quickly or accept students' contributions uncritically.

Teachers whose classroom observation data yielded high thoughtfulness scores were more likely to mention critical thinking and problem solving as important goals that

focused their lesson planning. In talking about the satisfactions of teaching, they tended to cite evidence of good student thinking about the content, whereas low-scoring teachers tended to talk only about student interest or positive response to lessons.

All teachers felt pressure to cover more content, but high-scoring teachers experienced this primarily as external pressure and tended to resist it by favoring depth over breadth. In contrast, low-scoring teachers experienced it primarily as internal pressure and thus emphasized breadth of content coverage over depth of topic development. All teachers mentioned that students are likely to resist higher-order thinking tasks, at least initially, but high-scoring teachers nevertheless emphasized these tasks in their classrooms. As a result, students described their classes as more difficult and challenging but also as more engaging and interesting.

Finally, thoughtfulness scores were unrelated to prior levels of student achievement, indicating that teachers can structure thoughtful discourse at all achievement levels. Taken together, these findings suggest that thoughtful, in-depth treatment that fosters higher-order thinking about social studies topics is feasible in most classrooms (not just those dominated by high achievers) and that teachers can overcome initial resistance and bring students to the point where they see higher-order thinking activities as more engaging and interesting than lower-order recitation and seatwork.

Fraenkel (1992) drew on case studies of high school social studies classes to identify factors associated with differences in effectiveness. He also found that the major factor determining the success of a class was the teacher, not student achievement levels. Less effective teachers tended to present ideas ready-made rather than to ask students to develop ideas for themselves. They tended to talk to students rather than with them. Often they did not seem to have a clear sense of where they were heading. They tended to engage students in busy work and to stress memorization and regurgitation of facts rather than understanding of ideas. Many did not seem to like what they were doing, to like their students, or to be having much fun. Unsurprisingly, their students rarely were active learners and often caused discipline problems.

In contrast, the more effective teachers often engaged students in discussions. When they did lecture, they combined speech with use of a projector or document camera, or showing pictures, maps, or other visuals. Their questions tended to elicit discussion (not just recitation), and they often asked students to respond to one another's comments. Students often worked in pairs or small groups while the teacher circulated and interacted with them. They were often required to function as active learners by role-playing or giving presentations in class. The teachers made a point of engaging students in activities designed to help them understand and require them to use the ideas they were learning.

These teachers appeared to like what they were doing, like their students, and like their subject matter. They had high expectations for the students, emphasized depth rather than breadth of coverage, were able to explain things clearly using examples that related to the students' lives, had reasonable wait times and were good listeners when students talked, demonstrated patience when students did not understand initially, varied their instructional approaches and types of activities, and displayed considerable command of their subject and ability to relate it to a variety of daily-life examples.

They also were highly attuned to their students. They encouraged students to take public risks by contributing their opinions to discussions and publicly discussing their mistakes. Yet they were quick to notice indicators of confusion or anxiety and to react by providing additional explanations, alternative assignments, or other scaffolding. They emphasized bringing to light students' thought processes for public examination and discussion. They maintained personal contacts with their students and arranged for frequent interaction among students through cooperative small-group activities.

Elementary Grades

While only limited research relevant to these methods has been done in elementary social studies, Thornton and Wenger (1990) reported observing lessons that exhibited many of the characteristics of thoughtfulness as described by Newmann and by Fraenkel and Stodolsky (1988).

For example, the quality of students' task engagement was higher during more cognitively complex activities than during lower level activities. In addition, White (1993) described several case studies in which teachers set up contexts and arranged tasks to allow students to construct meaning interactively instead of relying on a low-level textbook/recitation approach.

Other chapters in the same collection of case studies (Brophy, 1993) provide examples of desirable forms of classroom discourse. Levstik (1993) presented the case of Ruby, whose approach to teaching history to at-risk first graders featured a great deal of inquiry and discussion. Sosniak and Stodolsky (1993) presented the case of Carol Olsen, a teacher who used a conversational approach to teach inner-city fourth graders about geography, history, and world cultures. In both of these cases, the students had limited prior knowledge and thus needed to be provided with bases of information from which to work, but the teachers nevertheless were able to emphasize social construction of knowledge rather than recitation as their primary discourse pattern.

Engaging Students in Reflective Discourse about Powerful Ideas

When preparing your lesson plans, develop sets of questions that will stimulate your students to reflect on what they are learning and engage in thoughtful discussion of its meanings and implications. Reflective discourse is most successful once students have acquired a common content base through teacher explanation, interactive narrative, independent reading, watching a video, and so on. You also may have occasion to use drill activities to reinforce learning that needs to be memorized, as well as recitation activities to check and correct understanding of the initial knowledge base. However, most of your questions should be asked not just to monitor comprehension but to stimulate students to think about the content, connect it to their prior knowledge, and begin to explore its applications.

Thus, *questioning* ordinarily should not take the form of rapidly paced drills or attempts to elicit "right answers" to miscellaneous factual questions. Instead, questions should be used as means for engaging students with the content they are learning. They should stimulate students to process that content actively and "make it their own" by rephrasing it in their own words and considering its meanings and implications. Furthermore, the questions should focus on the most important elements of the content and guide students' thinking in ways that move them systematically toward key understandings. The idea is to build an integrated network of knowledge structured around powerful ideas, not to stimulate rote memorizing of miscellaneous information.

For each subtopic to be developed, *ask questions in sequences designed to help students construct connected understandings*. Use different kinds of question sequences to accommodate different instructional goals. To develop an unfamiliar topic, for example, you might begin with questions designed to stimulate interest in the topic or help students connect it to their prior experiences, then move to questions designed to elicit key ideas, then move to questions calling for reflection on or application of these ideas.

Where students have more knowledge about a topic, you might wish to place them in an application mode immediately, such as by posing a problem, eliciting alternative solution suggestions and rationales, and then engaging the group in reflective discussion of these ideas.

Do not try to develop complete scripts for question sequences and proceed through them rigidly. This would not be possible, because students' responses to teachers' questions are only partially predictable. Nor would it be wise because teachers need to adapt their lesson plans to developing situations and take advantage of "teachable moments" that students create by asking questions or making comments that are worth pursuing. Nevertheless, an important part of goal-oriented planning is the development of purposeful sequences of questions designed to help students construct key understandings. Such planned question sequences are much more likely to yield thoughtful classroom discourse than the inefficient patterns of questioning that occur when teachers have not thought through their goals in developing a particular subtopic.

Certain aspects of questioning techniques can enhance the power of your questions for stimulating student thinking. First, *questions ordinarily should be addressed to the entire class or group* rather than to a single designated student. This will encourage all students, and not just the designated individual, to think about the question. Second, before calling on anyone to respond, *allow sufficient wait time to enable students to process and formulate responses to the question*. You may need to emphasize to students that you are more interested in thoughtfulness and quality than in speed of response, as well as to discourage overly eager students from blurting out answers, distracting their peers by saying "I know!", or pleading with you to call on them. Finally, it is a good idea to *distribute response opportunities widely rather than allow a few students to answer most of your questions*. Students learn more if they are actively involved in discussions than if they sit passively without participating, and distributing response opportunities helps keep all students attentive and accountable.

Even if a discussion begins in a question-and-answer format, it should evolve into an exchange of views in which students respond to one another as well as to you, and in which they respond to statements as well as to questions. To conduct effective discussions, you will need to have your goals clearly in mind, establish a focus based on the big ideas you are attempting to develop, set boundaries, and facilitate interaction, but in other respects you are attempting to assume a less dominant and judgmental role than you assume in recitation activities.

If you are collecting ideas, record them for the class to see (on the board, a flip chart, and so forth) but do not evaluate them immediately. Once the conversation is underway, continue to participate in it periodically in order to point out connections between ideas, identify similarities or contrasts, request clarification or elaboration, invite students to respond to one another, summarize progress achieved so far, or suggest and test for possible consensus as it develops. However, do not push the students toward some previously determined conclusion (this would make the activity a guided discovery lesson rather than a discussion).

The pace of discussions is slower than that of recitations, with longer periods of silence between bursts of speech. These silent periods provide participants with opportunities to consider what has been said and to formulate responses.

Dillon (1988, 1990) has shown that teachers' statements can be just as effective as their questions for producing lengthy and insightful responses during discussions. Questions even may impede discussions at times, especially if they are perceived as attempts to test students rather than to solicit their ideas. Instead of continuing to ask questions,

you sometimes can sustain discussions effectively by simply remaining silent, by asking students to respond to what their peers have said, by probing for elaboration (“Tell us more about that” or “Perhaps you could give some examples”), by asking indirect questions (“I wonder what makes you think that” or “I was just thinking about whether that would make any difference”), by summarizing or restating what a student has said, or simply by making some declarative statement that adds to the discussion and indirectly invites further comment from students.

To encourage your students to participate optimally in discussions and get the most from them, you will need to socialize them to function as a learning community. Students will need to understand that the purpose of reflective discussion is to *work collaboratively* to deepen their understandings of the meanings and implications of content. They will be expected to listen carefully, respond thoughtfully, and participate assertively but respectfully in group discussions. Students should help create the guidelines for participating in a discussion, and these guidelines should be posted in the classroom for easy reference. The guidelines should be specific rather than general such as “respect others.” (Students often do not know what that looks or sounds like.) Have students generate specific guidelines, such as look at others when they are talking, do not interrupt, or do not engage in side-talking when others are talking. The teacher should model these guidelines so students understand them. Both in advancing their own ideas and in responding critically to their peers, students should build a case based on relevant evidence and arguments but avoid divisive or other inappropriate behavior.

Recent theory and research suggest that, even in the early elementary grades when students are just beginning to acquire a content base, teachers’ questions should be designed to emphasize sustained interactive discourse, not mere recitation. To the extent necessary, students should be taught to participate in such discourse in ways that support the development of the class as a collaborative learning community.

Consider involving students in a discussion about a matter of local interest. For example, should children be allowed to bring toys to school? Develop a series of prompts to promote discussion. For example, Why should children be allowed to bring toys to school? Shouldn’t children have the right or freedom to do so? Why shouldn’t children be allowed to bring toys to school?

Creating a Space for Classroom Discourse Focused on Discussion

Physical space can either encourage and inhibit productive classroom discourse, particularly discussion. When desks or tables are arranged in rows, in which students all face the same direction rather than each other, discussion can be stifled. Students need to be able to look at one another to exchange ideas. Arranging desks or tables in a horseshoe shape or in pods (for small group discussion) can help promote discussion since students

are facing each other. Some classrooms have an area of the room, often with a carpet, in which students can sit on the floor in a circle to engage in a discussion. In small or crowded classrooms, with some work and creativity, temporary physical spaces supportive of discussion can be made (i.e., by pushing desks or tables to the perimeter of the classroom).

A *community culture supportive of free expression of ideas* is also critical to fostering productive classroom discourse, particularly discussion. In a classroom where students feel comfortable with and trust each other enough to take risks in the kinds of things they say, substantive discussion (including civil disagreements) can occur. Students need to understand that even though they may disagree with one another, they can still be friends (a notion young children, in particular, have difficulty with). Teachers can model civil disagreement with other students or even with another teacher. Building a community supportive of free expression takes weeks, and even months; thus, discussions on controversial topics or discussions in which there may be heated disagreement are better timed later in the school year.

Providing students with the linguistic tools to participate in discussion is also helpful for promoting thoughtful and substantive exchange of ideas. Even if students are in a classroom supportive of discussion, they often are unfamiliar with the language used to start one, take a stand on an issue, respond to another student's idea, or summarize the discussion. Students benefit from being provided "sentence stems" to help them begin expressing their ideas. For example, a sentence stem such as, "I believe that _____" helps students frame their arguments. A sentence stem such as, "I agree with _____ because _____" or "I disagree with _____ because _____" helps students structure their response to a fellow classmate. A sentence stem such as, "There are different perspectives on this issue" or "Some people think _____ because _____, and some people think _____ because _____" helps students summarize the discussion.

Technology Tips

One inhibitor to students' participation in discussion is their reluctance to talk in large group settings. While participating in whole class discussions is a critical skill, some students benefit from alternative forms of discussion. For upper elementary students, consider creating an online discussion forum where students can express their opinions and ideas in a format in which they can take their time to formulate thoughts.

Assessing Discussion

A deterrent to incorporating discussion (and other forms of classroom discourse) into the curriculum is that discussion is difficult to assess: not everyone talks in a given discussion, and it is difficult to assess the students who do contribute to the discussion where conversation is quick and often overlaps among students. However, we hope that the fact that discussions are difficult to assess does not prevent you from including them in your instruction. Harris (2002, p. 213) identifies discrete discussion skills and offers a process for assessing them. Some of the substantive skills are using disciplinary knowledge; elaborating statements with explanations, reasons, or evidence; arguing by

analogy; and some of the procedural skills are inviting contributions from others; acknowledging the statements of others; and summarizing points of agreement or disagreement. You could modify these skills for assessment of discussion in your elementary classroom and create a matrix that lists these skills and students' names, and then make a check for each skill a student demonstrates in a given discussion. We do not recommend that all discussions are assessed like this, but assessing a handful of discussions per year like this may offer you a picture of students' growth over time, as well as which skills students continue to struggle with. Please see Chapter 9 for more ways to assess discussion.

Summary

Social constructivist models of teaching emphasize development of key ideas through sustained discourse in which teachers ask open-ended questions and students actively collaborate in constructing understandings by sharing and responding to ideas. Although it is impossible (and not even always desirable) to design and teach every social studies lesson in this way, we suggest you make time and space for this kind of teaching to promote critical thinking skills in your students.

To discuss a topic profitably, students need a common knowledge base from which to work. Elementary students (and especially primary students) often have only limited prior knowledge about topics addressed in the curriculum. Consequently, they often will need modeling or explanation from you or input from some other source to provide grounding

for subsequent discussion. We suggest your explanations should feature narrative (storytelling) rather than formal lecturing. Once the needed knowledge base is established, you should shift from an explainer to a discussion leader mode, asking sequences of questions designed to stimulate students to think about the meanings and applications of big ideas (and if appropriate, confront their misconceptions). The resulting discourse should feature sustained examination of a few key ideas, substantive coherence and continuity, sufficient wait time following questions, and other indicators of thoughtfulness. As much as possible, the teacher-student and student-student discourse in your classroom should feature the thoughtful exchange of ideas associated with the term *discussion* rather than the quizzing to elicit right answers associated with the term *recitation*.

Reflective Questions

1. Imagine an observer were in your classroom to determine how your students develop social studies understandings. Describe what will be occurring. What does the discourse look and sound like?
2. Reflect on your last social studies unit. Describe how the phenomenon of conceptual change unfolded.
3. Reflect on a recent or current social studies unit. What does it take to seriously build a content base with your students? Make sure you consider your students with special needs.
4. How can the narrative format serve students from diverse backgrounds?
5. What aspects of your social studies curriculum are amenable to representation within narrative structures?
6. How do you prepare your students for discussion? What kinds of "ground rules" will you establish? How will you encourage shy students to participate? How will you avoid letting more vocal students dominate?
7. Think about an upcoming lesson built around discussion. What elements will you consider and why? If you were to assess it, what would you do?

Your Turn: Developing Content Through Classroom Discourse

While you may not want to plan every lesson in your social studies curriculum to the level of specificity called for in the following activity, it will give you an opportunity to test your level of understanding of the content in this chapter. We encourage you to develop

content using narrative and to apply our guidelines for using discourse. Questions need to be selected and scaffolded so as to elicit the desired social construction of knowledge among members of the class.

Unit topic: _____

Specific lesson topic: _____

Specific goal(s) for the lesson: _____

Major understandings to be developed: _____

Identify questions you will use to assess existing networks of prior knowledge.

Identify questions you will use to detect misconceptions. _____

Identify questions you will use to encourage students to connect prior knowledge with new information. _____

Narrative structure for building a content base. (Imagine you are presenting new information to students based on their responses to previous questions. Write down your “story.”) _____

Identify specific questions you will use to stimulate students to think about the new content you have presented, connect it to prior knowledge, and begin to share its applications. _____

Identify open-ended and higher-order questions you will ask to encourage students to consider alternatives perspectives. _____

Identify specific questions and/or summary comments you will use to bring closure to the lesson. _____

After you have carefully structured your lesson using classroom discourse as the major modality for developing content, prepare to digitally record it. Select several of the following criteria to guide assessment of your lesson. You can monitor your progress toward becoming an effective scaffolder of classroom discourse by continuing to record your lessons and expanding the criteria for your reviews. This activity can also be effective for peer coaching and collaboration. Share the results with your principal. Listen for:

Coherence
Continuity
Wait time
Exchange of ideas

Students' work habits

- *Do they give auditory evidence of working collaboratively to deepen their understandings of meanings and implications of the content?*
 - *Do they clarify or justify their assertions?*
 - *Do they generate original ideas?*
 - *Do they show evidence of respect for each other's ideas?*
- *Do they make content their own by rephrasing it and considering its meanings and implications?*

Teacher's behaviors

- *Do I show interest in students' ideas?*
- *Do I model problem-solving processes?*
- *Do I acknowledge the difficulties involved in gaining clear understandings of problematic topics?*
- *Do I emphasize higher-order thinking?*
- *Do I distribute response opportunities widely?*
- *Do I combine lectures and discussions with illustrative materials and minds-on/hands-on learning activities?*
- *Do I encourage students to interact among themselves and respond to one another's comments?*
- *Do I demonstrate good listening skills?*
- *Do I encourage students to share their thinking in large- and small-group settings?*
- *Do I emphasize questions that move students systematically toward the key social education understandings?*
- *Is my pacing appropriate, giving students time to reflect, question, and formulate responses?*
- *Do I summarize and refocus when necessary?*

HOW CAN I ASSESS STUDENT LEARNING?

Devin Mulville, Teaching Intern

Introduction

When I used to hear the word assessment I automatically thought of coloring in bubbles and filling the blanks and choosing between letters A, B, and C. To me, these tests were ways for teachers to see how well they could trick their students, not to see what they actually knew and had learned. I love math and to me assessments = multiple choice + true/false + essay. Throughout my years as a student this was the structure of 90% of the tests I took and most of the time it was not the most effective way to prove my knowledge of material. Now that the tables have turned and I am now going to be the teacher who is doing the assessing, I have made a vow that I will never be the teacher who tries to trick my students or resorts to few or exclusively traditional formats when assessing my students. My problem prior to reading this chapter was I did not know how to go about evaluating my students in multiple and effective ways.

I was amazed by the number of ways a teacher can evaluate students. I realize now that not all the formats involve taking a written test. It is important that we switch up the formats to allow every student to be successful, just like how we change our lesson plans based on our students' needs and background knowledge from year to year. Of course, all our assessment decisions must also be tied to the goals.

I found the use of portfolios particularly interesting. A portfolio can serve as a conduit for presenting a student's longitudinal story and add to the teacher's observations and

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documentation. Having students create their own portfolios and decide which work samples are most important allows them to take more control of their learning. It also motivates them to do their best work all the time because they know they will have to put assignments into their portfolio that their teacher and parents will see. Students will be able to see how they have progressed over the course of a semester or school year instead of the teacher just telling them they have improved. There will be evidence of their development displayed in their portfolio. I plan on implementing portfolios next year because students will take more ownership of their work and will be able to witness their own strengths and weaknesses, which will in turn get them more excited about learning.

In conclusion, what surprised me the most as the result of reading and reflecting on this chapter was that multiple choice and true/false questions are acceptable to use if they match the goals. This chapter includes many examples and explains how to create these types of questions in an effective manner. As teachers we do need to have students practice using these types of items, so they are more comfortable with these formats when taking a standardized test or other assessment (such as the written part of a driver's license test.) I have seen firsthand that if students are not familiar with how to take a multiple choice or true/false tests, they become anxious and start filling in random bubbles.

The Present: A Broader View of Assessment and Evaluation

Recognizing the need for accountability but concerned about the narrowing effect on the curriculum that current versions of high-stakes testing might have, the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) and leading scholars who have focused on assessment methods have been arguing for social studies assessment that is well aligned with major social studies goals, more complete in the range of objectives addressed, and more authentic in the kinds of tasks included. NCSS guidelines call for systematic and vigorous evaluation of social studies instruction that: (1) bases the criteria for effectiveness primarily on the school's own statement of objectives; (2) includes assessment of progress not only in knowledge but in thinking skills, valuing, and social participation; (3) includes data from many sources, not just paper-pencil tests; and (4) is used for assessing student progress in learning and for planning curriculum improvements, not just for grading (NCSS, 1990).

We believe that standardized testing has a legitimate role within the larger social studies picture, but it is foolhardy to plan a full social studies curriculum around a few hours of testing. Instead, standards and assessment programs need to be kept in appropriate perspective within larger systematic efforts to accomplish major citizenship education goals. We encourage teachers and curriculum leaders to consider the intentions of national and state standards and benchmarks in relation to local social studies needs; reflect on what it means to experience powerful social studies teaching;

resist the tendencies for standards and high stakes testing to narrow the curriculum counterproductively; and develop local assessment plans that align with locally established social studies program goals and are not overly dependent on state or national instruments.

Authentic Assessment

The key to keeping standards and high-stakes testing in perspective is viewing assessment as an integral part of the curriculum and not just as an add-on. This view expands the notion of assessment beyond the paper-and-pencil test, an expansion that is needed in order to address the range of curricular goals. Newmann (1997), Wiggins (1989a, 1989b), and other scholars refer to this expanded notion as authentic assessment and note that authentic tasks have the following attributes:

- *Tasks go to the heart of essential learning (i.e., they ask for exhibitions of understandings and abilities that matter).*
- *Tasks resemble interdisciplinary real-life challenges, not academic busywork that is artificially neat, fragmented, and easy to grade.*
- *Tasks are standard-setting; they point students toward higher, richer levels of knowing.*
- *Tasks are worth striving toward and practicing.*
- *Tasks are known to students well in advance.*
- *Tasks strike teachers as worth the trouble.*
- *Tasks generally involve a higher-order challenge that requires students to go beyond the routine use of previously learned information.*
- *All tasks are attempted by all students.*

These attributes add up to an “exhibition of mastery” (Parker, 1991).

Authentic assessment should always reflect the full range of curricular goals, so multiple-choice, true-false, or essay tests sometimes will be appropriate. Other times, however, will require measures such as observation checklists, self-assessment checklists, open-ended “I learned” statements, “open-closed” windows, reflective journal entries, laboratory-type performance assessments, portfolios, or observation measures such as graphs for evaluating discussions. All of these tools can help students and the teacher to get a reading of how learning is progressing.

Since assessment is considered ongoing, frequently cast as preliminary, formative, and summative, many instructional activities can also be used as assessment tools. Different forms and times for assessment will be determined by the purpose of the learning situation, the kind of information acquired, and how it will be used to accomplish the social studies goals. Learning activities are both curriculum components that need to be assessed as such and mechanisms for eliciting indicators of students’ learning.

At the end of this chapter, an exercise is provided to help you become familiar with the NCSS (2010) Curriculum Standards and learn to judge activities as assessments. Assessment tools should be viewed as opportunities to take multiple snapshots of student performance and progress. It is most critical that the assessment tool matches the goals. Recall how we emphasized the importance of alignment in Chapter 3. Other considerations for the assessment tool include its level of difficulty, its appropriateness in terms of time and trouble, and its feasibility. More than one assessment tool often is appropriate to provide variety and balance, so opportunities for reading, writing, speaking, drawing, and so forth also merit consideration.





Goal-Oriented Assessment

Principle 11: Goal-Oriented Assessment: The teacher uses a variety of formal and informal assessment methods to monitor progress toward learning goals. The assessments the teacher selects come in a range of formats to provide students multiple and varied opportunities to demonstrate understanding of the content and skills taught, and to provide the teacher feedback on the effectiveness of the curriculum and instruction. Please see Chapter 14 for a more in-depth description of the principle.

What kinds of assessments (e.g., state assessments, authentic assessments, unit tests, and so forth) are used in your school? How do they influence instruction? Are they tied to the curricular goals?

Preliminary Assessment

Prior to formal instruction, eliciting students' prior knowledge (including both valid ideas and misconceptions) about the upcoming content is a good way to determine where you need to start. The preliminary assessment may be as simple as a TWL exercise (listing What I Think I Know and What I Want to Learn—with later attention to What I Learned). Using visuals that represent an upcoming unit to conduct a gallery walk or showing a video without the sound can generate curiosity and interest among students who then can verbalize their "I wonders." These "I wonders" can be posted and revisited as the unit unfolds. These strategies can be especially helpful to students who lack prior knowledge or those who have difficulty thinking in the abstract. Group or individual interviews focusing on student thinking associated with the content can also be very beneficial. For example, if you were planning a map unit with emphasis on elevation you might ask the following questions: What do you use maps for? How have you used them in the classroom? How have you used them with family and friends? Have you ever heard of the word elevation? If so, how would you explain it? What do you think an elevation map is? Why do you think people use elevation maps? What kinds of things do you think are on elevation maps? What types of things would an elevation map need to have to make it useful? Show an elevation map and ask questions such as why do you think there are different colors on this map? What do the numbers stand for on the key? What does sea level mean? (Burks, 2008)

A pretest is another form of preliminary assessment. Whatever form is selected, it should focus on the goals, and its results should be used to inform the planning of instruction. The results should be revisited at the conclusion of the unit to document student growth.

Formative and Summative Assessment

Formative assessment measures student understanding or performance with the purpose of evaluating the instruction or curriculum rather than to evaluate the student. It is often used midway through a unit or project to determine whether the students are grasping the key

ideas. Often, the reason students are not grasping the key ideas is not because they are incapable but because the instructional approaches are not effective. You should conduct formative assessment as the unit progresses, checking for student understanding of each new cluster of knowledge or skills. These assessments provide information about whether the class as a whole is ready to move on or needs further review as well as identify specific misunderstandings or other learning problems that require follow up with certain individuals.

Summative assessment refers to those assessments implemented at the end of the unit or marking period. It typically focuses on students' understanding and ability to apply the big ideas and skills emphasized within the unit. The tools we describe in the following pages can be used in or adapted to either situation. Typically, however, we think of formative assessments as taking less time and summative measures as reflecting an accumulation of knowledge, understanding, applications, and so forth.

It is important that the tools or instruments you select should match your goals, reflect your instruction, and communicate the idea that every learner is accountable. The results should be scrutinized to detect weaknesses in the assessment practices themselves as well as surface special learner needs, misunderstandings, and misconceptions. Analysis of results should include considering whether there is any need to adjust plans for future versions of current lessons or activities.

Assessment should convey expectations to students and provide feedback regarding their performance and progress or lack of it. It is important to provide students opportunities to self-assess and guidance for what they need to do to increase their success. Post-assessment debriefing or reflection should reemphasize the purposes and goals, reflect on how well they have been accomplished, and remind students where the assessment fits within the big picture.

Formal Assessment Tools

Multiple Choice Items

The multiple choice format is probably the most versatile form of objective test items. Every item has two parts: the stem that represents the problem or question, and three or more response choices, of which one is the correct answer and the others are distracters or plausible alternatives for students who do not know the answer (Good & Brophy, 1995). Consider the following illustration built around a unit on communication, with the goal being for students to recognize and understand various kinds of media and their purposes:

1. Which of these inventions is of least help to a disc jockey?
 1. record
 2. microphone
 3. camera
 4. studio
2. A person whose main job is to find out news is a:
 1. reporter
 2. printer
 3. typist
 4. proofreader
3. If you wanted to purchase a pet, which part of the newspaper would you check?
 1. letters to the editor
 2. movie section
 3. classified section
 4. comics

4. If you wanted to find out quickly how you could locate an unusual coin to add to your collection, what source would you check?
 1. eBay
 2. local newspaper
 3. radio
 4. telephone directory

It is challenging to build good multiple-choice items. Writing a stem that provides sufficient pertinent information but is not too wordy is very important, especially if some of your students have reading difficulties. We provide hints for writing good items. First, write the stem and correct answer simultaneously. Next, carefully analyze both question and answer to ensure accuracy and clarity. Finally, write your distracters. Are they worded to flow from the stem? Are they believable but incorrect or not as good as the correct alternatives? Are any of the distracters weird, odd-ball alternatives that students are likely to recognize as incorrect? If so, get rid of them. Are the distracters roughly the same length? If not, edit them or write new ones.

The advantages of multiple-choice items—if they match your goals—are that they can be scored quickly and objectively, and some of the effects of guessing are mitigated. Using this format, at least once in awhile, also prepares students for a format that is typically used on standardized tests.

True-False and Yes-No Items

True-false and yes-no items can be constructed much more quickly than multiple-choice items. However, a major limitation of this type of question is that much content built around big ideas is difficult to express in this format. Also, students will be correct 50 percent of the time by guessing because they are choosing between only two alternatives rather than four or five. Consequently, this type of question can be used successfully when only a general estimate of performance is needed.

There are strategic ways of building higher-order thinking into this type of assessment. One is to ask students to make false items true. Another is to ask them to explain the reasoning for their responses. Still another is to include a short text selection followed by a series of yes/no or true-false questions.

The following example is one based on the goal of developing strategies for being a wise consumer and applying them to real-life situations.

GRAND OPENING
42-inch TV sets
Beautiful picture, fine piece of furniture.
Hurry. They won't last at this price!
\$999.95
JEFF'S TV SHOP

After reading this ad, Mark and his dad hurried over to Jeff's TV shop. "You don't really want this TV," the salesman pleaded. "It's two years old and doesn't have a factory warranty. But if you insist on buying it and it causes you problems within 30 days, I'll try to get it fixed for you." Pointing to another television, the salesman said, "This brand new set with a five-year warranty is a steal for \$1,499.95."

Directions: Circle "yes" if the answer to the question is yes. Circle "no" if the answer to the question is no.

- | | | |
|-------------|--------|--|
| <u>Yes.</u> | No. 1. | Was Jeff's TV shop using bait-and-switch advertising? |
| <u>Yes.</u> | No. 2. | By using such words as "beautiful picture" and "fine piece of furniture," was Jeff puffing the TV set? |

- Yes. No. 3. Was the salesman's offer to "try and repair the set" a binding contract?
- Yes. No. 4. If Mark's dad bought the used television and it broke in a few days, would the manufacturer be likely to repair the set free of charge?

Reluctant readers and the time factor need to be considered when deciding whether to use a short text with yes/no or true/false items. Another consideration is that narrative followed by a series of items is a format frequently found on standardized measures. Often students are stressed not by the questions being asked but by the form in which they are presented; therefore, it is a good idea to take advantage of opportunities to prepare students for new encounters when they match the goal.

Short Answer and Completion Items

Short answer and completion items require students to finish a statement from recall rather than just recognize the correct answer. In a short-answer format, students provide their own responses. Suppose you were teaching a lesson on hunger and the goals were to (1) develop an understanding that in extreme cases people are unable to pay for the food they need; (2) help students acquire a sensitivity for people in need; and (3) practice citizenship as it relates to other people. You explained to your students what soup kitchens were, plotted the locations of soup kitchens on a local map, and discussed reasons why people come to soup kitchens. Finally, you read the story of *Uncle Willie and the Soup Kitchen* (DiSalvo-Ryan, 1991). You provided some background information and set the stage for "minds-on" listening by posing a couple of questions. After the debriefing and a large-group activity that had the students write an op-ed for the local newspaper explaining the class's ideas for helping local people who are in need of food, you prepared an open-ended assessment as follows:

1. A soup kitchen is _____.
2. People go to soup kitchens because _____.
3. Uncle Willie is a good citizen because _____.
4. People in need can _____.
5. Being a volunteer is _____.
6. Places in our community where people can go to get free food or food at a lower price include _____, _____, and _____.

See Alleman and Brophy (2001).

Responses would be shared and discussed in a follow-up to the assessment.

Matching Items

Matching tests present two lists and require students to pair up items from one list with items from the other. These tests lack the flexibility of multiple-choice tests because they require items with common properties, such as names, processes, events, or objects. A well-constructed matching test, however, contains a range of options from which the student chooses in attempting to match terms and definitions, important persons and their contributions, events and dates, and so forth.

Imagine that one of the goals of your fourth-grade unit on regions was for students to develop an understanding of energy sources and be able to explain how they are produced. A set of matching items might be used as part of the assessment:

Directions: Match each source of energy in Column 1 with the way in which it is produced in Column 2. Write the letter on the line in front of the question number. Some of the sources are produced in more than one way.

	Column 1	Column 2
<u>a, c, d</u>	1. oil	a. drilling
<u>a, c, d</u>	2. gas	b. digging
<u>b</u>	3. coal	c. manufacturing
<u>c</u>	4. gasoline	d. collecting
<u>d</u>	5. solar heat	
<u>c</u>	6. kerosene	
<u>b</u>	7. peat	
<u>c</u>	8. steam	
<u>c</u>	9. water power	
<u>c</u>	10. electricity	

To avoid cuing answers, it is helpful to have more response alternatives than items, or as is the case above, to include response alternatives that may be used more than once.

Essay Questions

Essay questions provide students with the greatest latitude to construct their own responses. Students are required to produce their own answers. They have the freedom to decide how to organize their response and the conclusions they will draw. Essay questions are most useful for assessing higher cognitive processes. The main limitations are the amount of time needed for writing and reading the responses and the ability to assess only a limited amount of student learning.

Providing students with several key words or phrases they might use in formulating their responses can “jump start” even the most reluctant writer/speller. This tactic is often referred to as a modified word wall. It can also be used as a stimulus for “table talk” prior to responding individually to the essay questions.

Many types of essay questions might be asked. Imagine that you have just completed a unit on government and your overarching goal was for students to develop an understanding and appreciation for the influence of government and the legal system on our daily lives. We have listed 10 types of essay questions and an example of each. It would be unlikely, however, that you would use all of these types in a single unit test.

1. Comparison of two things:
In what ways are rules and laws alike and different?
2. Decision (for and against):
Suppose that there is a law in your state that you cannot ride a motorcycle until you are 16 years old. Is this a fair law? Explain your answer.
3. Cause and effect:
Why do stores have signs posted that read, “Shoplifters will be prosecuted?”
4. Explanation of the use or meaning of some phrase or statement in a passage:
A sign in front of a store reads, “Handicapped Parking Only.” Explain what the sign means.
5. Analysis:
It is dark and you are riding your bike without any lights. Why is this dangerous?
6. Statement of relationships:
Why are older students instead of younger ones on your school’s safety patrol? Explain your reasons.

7. Discussion:
Explain what a lawyer and a judge do in the courtroom.
8. Reorganization of facts:
Tell the steps you would follow if your bicycle were stolen.
9. Formulation of new question (problems and questions raised):
Suppose that there were no laws against smoking. How would this affect the health of the people?
10. Criticism (as to the adequacy, correctness, or relevancy of a pointed statement):
“Students can come to school only when they want to.” Explain what is good and bad about that idea.

Before giving the essay test, write down what you would regard as the best answers to each of your essay questions. Doing this can disclose some inherent deficiencies to the questions, but more importantly the answers can serve as standards for evaluating your students' responses. If you decide to use rubrics, consider engaging your students in the conversation for creating them. For example, if you were to ask students to write a journal entry focusing on the reasons for taxes or comparing the Vietnam War to the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, talk about how many ideas should be included, the role of examples for adding credibility to the response, and the importance of spelling and grammar. Consider modeling (using a different example) what a strong journal entry would look like. Co-constructing rubrics can build ownership and enlist students as partners in designing and using them. Make sure you start with a sharply focused vision of a good response (Stiggins, 2001).

Essay tests are most appropriate in classrooms that are literacy rich. Students will be most successful if they have had many in-class opportunities to be verbally active in both large- and small-group settings. Primary-grade students who are still mastering the basics of writing are not yet ready to compose written responses to essay questions, but they can respond orally during interview assessments.

As a student, what kinds of assessments have you taken that best reflected your knowledge and skills?

As a teacher, why is it important to vary the kinds of assessments you use?

Criteria and Validity

While many social studies formal assessment items have correct answers, items with open-ended prompts and performance tasks are also encouraged in order to assess understanding and encourage higher-order thinking. When those are included, clear and specific criteria are needed to insure that the judgment of both are consistent and fair.

The criteria need to be derived from the goals, be central to the performance, and go beyond the qualities that are simply easy to see. An analytic rubric can serve this purpose. It consists of a fixed measurement scale (usually 3 to 6 levels) depending on the assignment. For each objective, descriptions are provided for each level of

understanding. Analytic rubrics describe the degree of quality, proficiency, or understanding along a continuum. They answer the following questions:

- *By what criteria should performance be judged and discriminated?*
- *Where should we look and what should we look for to judge performance success?*
- *How is each level of understanding differentiated from the others?*

One major question to consider is how should the different levels of quality, proficiency, or understanding be described and distinguished from one another? (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005, p. 173). We have provided a rubric for an assessment that involves writing a letter expressing an opinion on a public policy issue as an example. (This assessment integrates social studies and literacy.) In the first column, we list the three objectives aligned with the assessment. In the next four columns, we present the criteria for achieving the particular level of understanding.

Objective	No Evidence	Beginning	Developing	Meeting
Expresses a position on a public policy issue and supports the position with a reasoned argument (e.g., using a core democratic value or data).	Does not take a stand.	Expresses a position on the public policy issue based on personal belief or experience that is vague.	Expresses a position on the public policy issue and supports the position with an argument based on personal belief or experience accompanied by example.	Expresses a position on the public policy issue with an argument based on a core democratic value or on supporting data.
Sets a purpose, considers audience, and begins to use styles and patterns typically used in crafting informational pieces.	Does not set a purpose, consider audience, or use styles and patterns from informational pieces.	Sets a vague purpose, vaguely considers audience, and shows minimal use of styles and patterns from informational pieces.	Does one or two of the following: sets a purpose, considers audience, and uses some styles and patterns from informational pieces.	Sets a purpose, considers audience, and uses some styles and patterns from informational pieces.
Writes a letter that is grammatically correct, clear, and well-organized.	Writing is not grammatically correct; writing is not organized or clear.	Writing has several grammatical errors, writing shows minimal organization and clarity.	Writing has few grammatical errors, arguments are mostly clear, and the letter is fairly well-organized.	Writing is grammatically correct, clear, and well-organized.

As you probably noticed, the first objective is social studies, and the second two are literacy. When determining a final score or grade for the assessment, you may decide that not all objectives are equal in weight. For example, for this assessment the first objective might be worth double what the other two are.

When designing these rubrics, it is often helpful to insert sample student responses for each level of understanding. Rubrics take time to develop, and you might not feel you “have it right” even after several tries. For children in older grades, we suggest sometimes co-constructing the rubric with students, so that they have a well-developed understanding of what is expected of them. Often the reason students perform poorly on assessments is that they are unclear about the expectations. If the social studies

assessment response needs only a yes or no or right/wrong determination, a checklist is usually used instead of a rubric.

Student Work

Students should be given opportunities to analyze their own work given the guidelines and/or rubrics provided. When used, this process needs to be carefully scaffolded. Preliminary questions might include: “Is this your best work? Explain. Did you complete the assignment? If not, please explain. What improvements could you make next time?” These questions could be followed by application of the criteria that accompanied the assignment.

While the analysis of student work serves as an internal audit for students, it is equally as important for the teacher. In fact, it is considered to be an essential part of teaching and it serves to inform planning with an eye toward improving student learning. This can be accomplished by:

- *Identifying the gaps between goals for student achievement and actual student performance;*
- *Providing information that teachers can use to modify their practices and measure their effects on student learning;*
- *Helping teachers to develop a new and deeper understanding of their students.*

Informal Assessment

Informal as well as formal assessment should be an integral part of the curriculum rather than an add on or afterthought. In fact, it should be considered early in the planning process. The way it is carried out sets the tone for expectations and conveys to students what is valued. In the previous sections of this chapter we have emphasized traditional approaches to knowledge and skills and described student achievement associated with goals for knowing, understanding, and applying within the context of local, state, and national frameworks. Participation, engagement, understanding, values, attitudes, dispositions, and empathy are equally important within a comprehensive social studies program. The assessment of these behaviors is best addressed at the local level and is typically done informally. It is important to document your observations and look for patterns. This will enable you as the teacher to provide rich feedback to students individually as well as inform your future planning and instruction.

Participation in Discussions

The kind of assessment implied by constructivism flows from the belief that students develop new knowledge and make it their own through an active process of “meaning making.” Constructivists often differ among themselves in their philosophical beliefs regarding the nature of knowledge, but they all favor moving from transmission models of teaching toward models that involve crafting reflective discussions scaffolded around networks of powerful ideas.

Social constructivists emphasize that the teaching-learning process works best in social settings in which individuals engage in discourse about a topic. Participants advance their own thinking through exposure to the views and insights of others. Communicating their own beliefs and understandings forces them to articulate their ideas more clearly, which sharpens their conceptions and frequently helps them make new connections.

As the teacher, you need to determine what behaviors are expected of students during discussions, create a set of norms, and over time determine if the behaviors are being realized. The following three examples illustrate the kinds of tools you can create to help students understand more clearly what is expected and to monitor one another as well as themselves (see Tables 9.1, 9.2, and 9.3).

Engagement and Understanding

As a teacher, you will want to acquire a broad range of assessment tools to develop a comprehensive profile of each student in your classroom. The most important consideration in selecting an assessment instrument is to make sure it matches your goal. Sometimes you will want to assess formally using one or more of the more traditional

TABLE 9.1 TEACHER'S EVALUATION OF INDIVIDUAL CONTRIBUTIONS TO DISCUSSION

Select a few students each day for observation and feedback. Use checkmarks to indicate a successful meeting of behaviors.				
Student Names	_____	_____	_____	_____
Student Behaviors				
Helps define the issues	_____	_____	_____	_____
Sticks to the topic	_____	_____	_____	_____
Is an interested and willing listener	_____	_____	_____	_____
Considers ideas contrary to own	_____	_____	_____	_____
Synthesizes information presented by peers	_____	_____	_____	_____
Generalizes when appropriate	_____	_____	_____	_____
Arrives at conclusions that produce new meaning	_____	_____	_____	_____

TABLE 9.2 GROUP EVALUATION OF DISCUSSION

	Always	Usually	Sometimes	Never
1. We checked to make sure everyone understood what to do.	_____	_____	_____	_____
2. We responded to questions, giving explanations where needed.	_____	_____	_____	_____
3. We clarified what we did not understand.	_____	_____	_____	_____
4. We helped one another and made sure we all understood and could apply what we learned.	_____	_____	_____	_____

TABLE 9.3 INDIVIDUAL'S SELF-ASSESSMENT OF CONTRIBUTIONS TO DISCUSSION

How well do I work with my peers?	Always	Usually	Sometimes	Never
I cooperate with others as we work toward our group's goals.	_____	_____	_____	_____
I keep on task.	_____	_____	_____	_____
I contribute new ideas.	_____	_____	_____	_____
I make constructive suggestions when asked for help.	_____	_____	_____	_____
I give others encouragement.	_____	_____	_____	_____

tools previously described. Other times you will use more informal measures such as anecdotal records, open/closed windows, or “I learned” statements.

Anecdotal records enable you to record specific incidents of student behavior over a period of time. Interpersonal relations, the development of language, geographic, or problem-solving skills, contributions to class discussions, and changes in interest or attitudinal patterns are among the many types of information about students that can be described in anecdotal records. Such records should portray the specifics of student behavior at a given time and place. Your interpretations and suggestions for improvement should be recorded separately.

[Example of anecdotal record, 5/1/11: Jamie asked three higher-order thinking questions during our discussion about world hunger; she also contributed two key ideas regarding how our class could help. She brought in an informational text on the topic from the library.]

Open-closed windows is another useful tool to gauge where students are in their learning. Provide students with a piece of lined paper. Have them fold the paper in half (vertically), write “Open” at the top of the left-hand side, and write “Closed” at the top of the right-hand side. Then ask them to think about what they have learned and list those things under the open category. Most students will probably have a long list. Then ask them to think about what things from the lesson (or series of lessons) they still are unclear or confused about. Ask them to list these questions on the closed side. Then ask them to share in pairs. This tool is particularly useful when you want to encourage students to discuss what they have been learning among themselves. Closed windows can be opened by peer conversations, and those that remain closed can be addressed during subsequent instruction.

Open	Closed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Governments are classified as democracies or dictatorships. Customs and beliefs are reflected in governments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Why do some countries have kings and queens yet they have freedoms similar to ours?

“I learned” statements are simple but they can reveal a lot over time. At the end of an activity or lesson, ask students to write down or share verbally what they learned. This provides each student with an opportunity to reflect on the experience. The responses will give you a measure of what students thought was important.

- I learned that voting is _____
- I learned that a democracy is _____
- I learned that people must have certain qualifications to vote including _____

Think about a future lesson you will teach. How will you informally assess student learning? What are indicators that students are grasping the content?

Performance Assessment: The Laboratory Model

The “laboratory” model is another useful tool. This form is usually implemented at the end of a unit. You probably have experienced it in high school or college science classes. On “test” day, stations are located at desks, bulletin boards, whiteboards, murals, wall charts, computer screens, or other appropriate places. Each station displays material such as a chart, artifacts, or an open book with a marked passage. Students visit the stations with clipboards, answer sheets, and pencils in hand. When instructed to do so, they move to the next station. Some time should be allowed for returning to stations where questions have been left unanswered. When all the students have finished, answers are checked.

This model can work very successfully as a means of fostering authentic performance assessment in elementary social studies. Of course, like every type of assessment considered, it must be driven by the social studies goals. If one of the goals of a unit on community is to develop understandings related to transportation systems, then students might learn about how to read and interpret bus schedules, locate bike paths, or find the most direct routes for reaching certain sites. Later, they might be asked to resolve transportation dilemmas using a city map, bus schedules, and other pertinent artifacts at one or more testing stations.

Given the goals for the community unit, it is likely that charts, murals, passages from books, slides, flat pictures, newspaper ads, student projects, and so on, would be used to develop major understandings. These could easily be placed at individual stations accompanied by a series of questions that address the big ideas and draw upon skills such as location, decision making, advertising techniques, and so forth.

Here are some helpful hints to consider when planning laboratory-type assessments:

- *Try to make the exercises similar in length.*
- *Begin each sequence with an easy question and build toward the most challenging one.*
- *Consider providing optional questions at some of the stations.*
- *For younger students, arrange for adults or older students to help with reading items or manipulating materials.*
- *If you are concerned about having a station for each student, divide the number of stations in half. You can have half of the class take the test while the other half works on a project in the library, then switch roles. Students can later work in pairs to correct their responses. For younger students, invite upper grade mentor-partners to do the reading and writing.*
- *Plan a “dry run” of the model before you use it.*
- *After administering several lab tests in social studies successfully, gradually add student projects at stations. More advanced students can design questions around their individual and group projects based on the goals of the unit. Provide them with whatever guidelines needed to ensure that they include questions that address higher-order thinking.*
- *Be open. There are no hard and fast rules for this model, except that the items must be based on your goals and matched to your teaching modalities.*

To stimulate your thinking regarding the use of authentic assessments, we have provided sample station plans from two units. (See Figures 9.1 and 9.2)

The number of questions per station and the amount of time allocated for each station will depend on your goals and the age and abilities of your students. As you complete your final preparations for trying this model, we suggest you go through the Lab Test Checklist (see Figure 9.3). You should be able to answer “yes” to each question.

Another sample of a performance lab test follows. This one was designed for a group of third graders learning about their community and world, with a heavy emphasis on maps.

FIGURE 9.1 Sample Stations for a Laboratory Assessment in Geography

STATION 1. Questions about the Globe

Turn the globe slowly. Find the country marked with an X.

1. What is the name of this country?

2. In what hemispheres is it located? (Circle two of these.)
Eastern Western Northern Southern
3. Is the time of day earlier or later in this place than here?

4. Approximately how many miles is it from this country to here?

5. What would be the fastest mode of transportation to take from here to this place?

6. If you were to travel southwest from here, would you reach this country or the Hawaiian Islands first? _____

STATION 2. The Kyoto Billboard

(A student project of a billboard advertising Kyoto is displayed at this station.)

1. Is Kyoto an old or a young place? _____
2. Is it a country, province, or city? _____
3. If you were a gardener, would you expect to find work here? _____
Why or why not? _____
4. If you were a deep sea fisherman, would you find work here? _____
Why or why not? _____
5. According to the billboard, what is the most unique characteristic of Kyoto?

6. According to the billboard, what is one thing a tourist could do for entertainment?

7. (Optional) According to the billboard, what is one thing that Kyoto and (a city near you) have in common?

Portfolios as a Means of Documenting Student Progress

Portfolios can serve as a means for collecting, organizing, and showcasing student work, and they can provide opportunities for analyzing and discussing student progress over time. While most teachers would have students develop a composite of work samples from across the subject areas for portfolios, we will focus on the social studies section. Examples of work types we have observed on visits to classrooms include research projects on such topics as “Customs from Our Heritage That We Observe in Our Home,” “Rosa Parks, A Champion of Civil Rights,” and “Life in the Swiss Alps;” and essays such as “Why I Would Prefer to Live in the City versus the Country,” “Some of the Hidden Advantages of Cold Climates,” and “What I Can Do to Save Our Country Environmentally.” Charts, graphs, maps, photos, letters from pen pals across the globe,

FIGURE 9.2
Performance Lab Test
for Third-Grade
Unit

STATION #1: Pictures of people in our school community who help our school run smoothly

1. What do these people have in common?
2. What is the purpose of a school community?
3. Which member of the school community is of the most interest to you? Please explain.

STATION #2: Pictures of school community members cooperating

1. Why do community members need to cooperate?
2. What kinds of problems can school community members solve?
3. How are the school and the community alike?

STATION #3: Map of the school

1. When you enter the front door of our school and turn to your right, whose office do you come to first?
2. Give the directions to the principal's office from the front door entrance.
3. How would you get to the library from the principal's office?
4. Explain how you would get to the computer lab from the principal's office.

STATION #4: Map of North America

1. What is the largest country in North America?
2. Is Mexico or the United States the larger country?
3. Where is Central America in relation to Greenland?
4. Which country do you think would have the coldest temperatures in winter? Why?

STATION #5: Regional map of the United States

1. What is the northernmost state in our region?
2. If you were flying from North Carolina to Mexico, how many major rivers would you cross? What are their names?
3. Which ocean is closest to New Mexico?
4. If you are planning a winter vacation and want to experience warm weather, where would you go and why?

STATION #6: Five states, five Great Lakes

1. What is the purpose of the compass rose?
2. Where is Michigan in relation to the Ohio River?
3. Which Great Lake separates Michigan from Illinois?
4. Where is Lake Superior in relation to the Mississippi River?
5. Would you cross any of the Great Lakes if you were flying from Lansing, Michigan to Anchorage, Alaska? Explain.

STATION #7: Michigan county map

1. What county is Lansing in?
2. What county is in the southwest corner of our state?
3. In what direction would you travel (from Detroit) to get to Cheboygan? To Grand Rapids?

STATION #8: Road map of Michigan

1. What is the best way to go from Dansville to Mason?
 2. What is the best way to go from Dansville to Stockbridge?
 3. Approximately how many miles is it from Dansville to Leslie?
 4. How would you get from Dansville to the state capital?
-

FIGURE 9.3 Lab Test Checklist

Did you . . .	
_____	acquire clipboards for students to use?
_____	match test items to objectives (subsets of goals)?
_____	match test items to concepts and skills?
_____	design test items that include higher-order thinking?
_____	use the wide variety of instructional materials that you used in teaching?
_____	use student-made materials? (Gradually infuse these after several successful lab experiences.)
_____	provide optional test items for diverse learners at some of the stations?
_____	make provisions for students to catch up on their writing as they progress through the test?
_____	attempt to make items at each station similar in length, or make necessary accommodations?
_____	provide answer sheets that are easily interpreted?
_____	plan for students who complete the test in minimum time?
_____	prepare an effective feedback strategy?
_____	plan a strategy for reteaching (if necessary)?
_____	plan a strategy for collecting and recording student results?

piece(s) of work are you most proud of and why?" "What would you add or do differently next time?" "Which social studies unit was most meaningful to you and why?" "What do the portfolio entries say about you as a learner?"

Potential portfolio contents should reflect the diversity of reading, writing, questioning, analyzing, and experiences that are incorporated with the social studies units. They also should reveal students' continuing development. The social studies section should represent the important things learned in that subject. It should serve as a powerful stimulus for students to use as they articulate the major understandings in the units of study and evaluate their own work.

Periodically, students should be expected to confer about their work with their peers and with you as their teacher. One teacher we observed also has her students confer with the teacher they will have next year, explaining what they have learned across the year and what knowledge, skills, understandings, appreciations, applications, and curiosities they will bring to the next grade.

Student-Led Parent Conferences

We also have witnessed students, beginning in the early grades, conducting conferences with their teachers and family members regarding their social studies goals and showing work samples to represent where they are in their development, what aspects they need to work on more diligently, and what types of assistance and support they think they need from the family. Student-led conferences provide an opportunity to talk about what has been learned, using the contents of the portfolio as the springboard for discussion. These conferences between the student and the teacher are often arranged on an informal, ongoing basis. Ideally, they include one or two sessions during the year with students and their families. The combination of students' work collected over time with their own explanations of what they did and why provides a powerful venue for students to begin assessing their own progress. Often students

simply do not know what they know, so when they verbalize it, it is as informative to the student as it is to his or her audience. Although conferences vary in purpose, they share the intent of raising students' interests in their own learning, helping them to be more reflective about it, and as a result, taking more responsibility for it. They begin to see connections among reading, writing, speaking, and thinking, as well as across content areas, and both they and their families begin to realize that learning is a continuous and ongoing process.

Student-led parent conferences are motivating because they incorporate elements of choice (of what work to include) and create authentic audiences and venues for assessment. They also reveal levels of learning and openly certify that additional work is needed in certain areas. We view this approach as extraordinary in building a sense of self-efficacy in the domain of social studies education.

Technology Tips

Developing rubrics, assessing student work, and documenting student progress throughout the school year can be very time-consuming. We strongly suggest you develop efficient ways of evaluating and documenting the work of students, and technology can be very helpful in doing so. Creating rubrics that you can use to evaluate students' work and then share with them (and their families) electronically via e-mail or via a classroom website can help ensure the work and its evaluation are not lost, and can save time and paper. Creating e-portfolios with students is also effective for sharing and permanently storing student work.

Summary

Assessment should be treated as an ongoing and integral part of each social studies unit. The results should be scrutinized to detect weaknesses in the assessment practices themselves as well as to surface special learner needs, misunderstandings, or misconceptions. The results of the ongoing analysis should be carefully considered when reviewing, and if necessary, adjusting plans for future versions of currently taught units.

The assessment should address the full range of goals pursued in the unit, including attitudes, values, and dispositions along with knowledge and skills. Different assessment tools might be more or less appropriate at the different stages of assessment (preliminary, formative,

summative), but the unit's assessment components should build toward authentic applications at the ends of lesson sequences and the unit itself. Rubrics can be very useful in establishing and communicating clear expectations of student work. In addition to traditional formats such as multiple choice, short answer, and essay questions, we recommend a variety of informal assessments as well as the use of portfolios to organize assessments. An especially powerful form of portfolio assessment includes the student-led conference in which students assemble portfolio entries illustrating their work and present them not only to the teacher but to parents or other family members who attend the conference.

Reflective Questions

1. How do you view the relationship between ongoing assessment and academic achievement?
2. How do you view social studies assessment in the early grades?
3. What do you view as the major challenges of social studies assessment for the classroom teacher?

4. What are the challenges associated with student work as a form of assessment?
5. What do you see as the value of rubrics?
6. How do you view the relationships among assessment, expectations, and accountability?

What are some scenarios that would illustrate these relationships?

7. Why do you think assessment and evaluation are sometimes seen as negatives by teachers?

Your Turn: Evaluation

Your unit assessment. Select a social studies unit that you have designed and taught, or one that you have observed being taught. Collect the evaluation materials that were used as preliminary, formative, and summative assessment. Examine them in terms of the following criteria:

- *Do the written items reflect the major understandings that were developed?*
- *Are the items reflective of the unit goals?*
- *Does student work show a balance between knowledge and skills on the one hand and values and dispositions on the other?*
- *If standardized, norm-referenced tests or publisher-supplied criterion-referenced tests are used, do the items closely match the values, goals, and major understandings defined in the local social studies curriculum?*
- *How authentic was the assessment? (Formal strategies? Informal strategies?)*
- *What evidence is there that performance assessment is being woven into the social studies curriculum?*
- *Is social studies finding its way into portfolios?*
- *Are teachers, at least, talking about student-led conferences and the role they can play in engendering student responsibility and a sense of self-efficacy?*

After you reflect on the responses from this exercise, write a paragraph characterizing what you have observed about the evaluation component of the unit. Write a second paragraph describing what you would retain and what you would modify and/or add to make the evaluation reflect ideal learner outcomes more clearly.

Using the laboratory model. The laboratory model for social studies performance assessment probably is the one with which you have had the least experience in the elementary school classroom. We urge you to incorporate it into one of your upcoming units. Start small, with just a few stations. One might consist of a wall map accompanied by a series of questions, another might be a chart, another an open book with a marked passage, and another might include digital photographs and questions. As students become more acclimated to the lab-like process, and as they become more adept at engaging in higher-order thinking, you can expand the number and nature of the stations. At some point, at least by fourth grade, you can include their finished products and their questions as a part of the lab test. Our experiences suggest that students are stimulated by this type of assessment and find it more challenging than fearful.

OR



Using NCSS Curriculum Standards and Learning Expectations. Use the following exercise focusing on the 10 NCSS Themes and some performance indicators to assess your level of understanding regarding the use of activities as assessments (providing they match the goals, are the appropriate level of difficulty, feasible, and cost effective in terms of time and trouble). There are no correct answers. The emphasis should be on the reasons you provide for your decisions regarding whether the item is good, bad, or conditional given other information you would need.

Early Elementary, Theme I. Culture

<i>Learner Expectation</i>	Learners will be able to explain and describe similarities and differences in the ways cultural groups meet similar needs and concerns.		
<i>Assessment</i>	The teacher has prepared a bulletin board that depicts a range of physical features. Each student is asked to select a picture from the photo box and explain where it fits on the bulletin board. (Each picture represents a different culture, and the student is expected to explain how, for example, the Swiss people might use their mountainous environment.)		
<i>Rate the Assessment</i>	Good	Bad	Conditional

Early Elementary, Theme II. Time, Continuity, and Change

<i>Learner Expectation</i>	Learners will be able to construct simple timelines that indicate an understanding of a sequence of events and reveal examples of change.		
<i>Assessment</i>	Each student is asked to construct a timeline depicting the sequence and changes that have occurred in his/her family and verbally describe these changes to the class.		
<i>Rate the Assessment</i>	Good	Bad	Conditional

Early Elementary, Theme III. People, Places, and Environment

<i>Learner Expectation</i>	Learners will be able to ask and find answers to geographic questions related to the school, community, state, region, and world.		
<i>Assessment</i>	Each student is given a physical map of the community and asked to locate three sites where the land might be used differently, visually depict possibilities, and be able to explain the reasoning to the class.		
<i>Rate the Assessment</i>	Good	Bad	Conditional

Early Elementary, Theme IV. Individual Development and Identity

<i>Learner Expectation</i>	Learners will understand such concepts as family and extended family.		
<i>Assessment</i>	Each student is asked to bring in pictures and words to describe his/her nuclear and extended family. These will be assembled and put in individual book form. If students wish to draw pictures, they will be encouraged to do this during "down time" or at home. Students will share their family books with the class and describe the unique features of their nuclear and extended families.		
<i>Rate the Assessment</i>	Good	Bad	Conditional

Early Elementary, Theme V. Individuals, Groups, and Institutions

<i>Learner Expectation</i>	Learners will be able to find answers to questions about individual, group, and institutional influences.		
<i>Assessment</i>	Each student will be given a list of institutions that promote the common good and asked to explain the contribution of each. Consider the tradeoffs associated with each.		
<i>Rate the Assessment</i>	Good	Bad	Conditional

Middle Grades, Theme VI. Power, Authority, and Governance

<i>Learner Expectation</i>	Learners will understand the ways in which governments meet the needs and wants of citizens, manage conflict, and establish order and security.		
<i>Assessment</i>	Students will be asked to list at least five examples of how our government meets the needs and wants of citizens, manages conflict, and establishes order and security. They then will be given a set of pictures to sort according to the three categories and explain their reasoning.		
<i>Rate the Assessment</i>	Good	Bad	Conditional

Middle Grades, Theme VII. Production, Distribution, and Consumption

<i>Learner Expectation</i>	Learners will be able to compare their own economic decisions with those of others and consider the wider consequences of those decisions.		
<i>Assessment</i>	Write an individual solution to a problem that affects everybody in the class. Have the class chart and compare the various opportunity costs and the tradeoffs and consequences of the decisions.		
<i>Rate the Assessment</i>	Good	Bad	Conditional

Middle Grades, Theme VIII. Science, Technology, and Society

<i>Learner Expectation</i>	Learners understand how science and technology have changed people's perceptions of the social and natural world, as well as their relationships to the land and so forth.		
<i>Assessment</i>	Students will read about the Seven Wonders and design a structure of their own worth being called an Eighth Wonder. They will describe the technology needed to build their wonder and consider its costs and benefits to society. Each student's project includes a written component that is evaluated on two criteria: analysis of the relationship between technology and building structure and the description of the potential impact of the technology on the environment.		
<i>Rate the Assessment</i>	Good	Bad	Conditional

Middle Grades, Theme IX. Global Connections

<i>Learner Expectation</i>	Learners will be able to analyze examples of conflict, cooperation, and interdependence among groups, communities, regions, societies, and nations.		
<i>Assessment</i>	Students are given a series of articles written during the Gulf War. Each student is to select three examples and describe how conflict, cooperation, and interdependence were incorporated into each of the situations.		
<i>Rate the Assessment</i>	Good	Bad	Conditional

Middle Grades, Theme X. Civic Ideals and Practices

<i>Learner Expectation</i>	Learners will understand key practices involving the rights and responsibilities of citizenship.		
<i>Assessment</i>	Students are asked (during a two-day period) to develop an essay with pictures collected in advance to explain what the rights and responsibilities of the local citizenry have come to mean. Examples should be included.		
<i>Rate the Assessment</i>	Good	Bad	Conditional

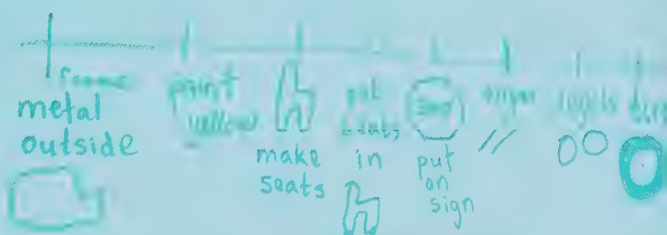
WHAT ARE SOME OTHER STRATEGIES FOR TEACHING SOCIAL STUDIES?

Andy Ley, Second Year teacher

It's no wonder that in today's classrooms during social studies lessons, you often see a lot of bored faces. Some of my K-12 social studies teachers, including "yours truly" as a pre-intern, sometimes fell into the mind numbing routine of teaching social studies as a bunch of disconnected facts taught only from the readings in the text book. As a pre-intern it was easy to have my students round robin read the chapter and then follow the teacher edition word for word. I knew deep down it wasn't effective; however, when you are overwhelmed in planning for so many subjects you often cheat. Social studies is such an important subject in school because it is all around us, and an integral part of our lives, yet I fell into the rut and focused totally on classroom management. I feared my students might get out of hand if I let them work together, sometimes be out of their seats, and so forth.

After enrolling in my first social studies course, reading this chapter, and reflecting on my early attempts at social studies lessons, I gradually began to realize that I had to listen to my head and to my heart to create a space in my classroom where my students and I could investigate the big ideas together. In order for social studies to be authentic and meaningful, I knew my students must relate to the content. By gradually concentrating my social studies units on a set of big ideas, and then planning numerous ways to engage my students in the participation of social studies, I began to notice

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subtle changes in my students' behavior during social studies instruction. They gave me, and each other, lots of eye contact; they became very inquisitive asking lots of questions; they began to look for library books that focused on the topics we were discussing; and so forth.

Late in the semester I was assigned to design and teach a unit on the American Revolution. I decided to emphasize strategies such as mock trials and primary source investigation. I provided my students with a collection of information from authentic sources such as documentaries and original letters with an eye toward developing committees of correspondence and mock trials. To make the content of this time period come alive for my students, I split my class into their own committees and the students wrote letters as if they were colonists summarizing what was being taught in class. I knew the strategy of creating committees of correspondence would match the content and allow my students to become personally attached to the material. Their letters also allowed me to assess my students' understanding of the topic in a more meaningful way. They were not required to fill in bubbles or answer questions, but instead they were encouraged to share their feelings and opinions about the material. Students read each other's letters at the start of the next social studies period. This was a great way to refresh themselves on the content covered and also respond to their classmates' ideas which created ownership of the content.

In order to sustain students' affective responses, at the end of the unit, we created a mock continental congress. Working in small groups, the students reviewed their previous letters and came up with some key points they wanted to bring to the discussion. While I led the congress, I posed questions based on the big ideas and the supportive content covered and provided opportunities for students to include their interpretations. The students were extremely respectful during the discussion. They were emotionally connected with the material and were able to share their own ideas. I could really tell the content meant a lot to them because voices got raised, feelings were expressed, and students had a lot to say. This mock continental congress allowed me to give my students an authentic summative assessment. I kept anecdotal records as a means of documenting individual input, and I used "I learned" statements to assess their levels of understanding. During subsequent lessons, I used case studies, some online simulation, and role plays. We even went to a virtual museum.

Throughout my journey of moving beyond the textbook, I began to understand that my greatest barrier had been the fear that management issues would arise if I relinquished control. Once I realized that the higher the level of student engagement and interest, the fewer the discipline problems, I became free!

Teaching strategies, a term we use interchangeably with teaching approaches, influences your students' attitudes about the content, their desire to learn it, what they learn, their retention level, and the content's impact on their lives. Most principles and examples in the previous chapters featured discussion, interactive narrative, and other common

approaches to everyday lessons. In this chapter we describe several other instructional strategies that we encourage you to consider as you plan your year. Pay especially close attention to those approaches that are least familiar to you, review the ones you have tried before with an eye toward new aspects to consider, and plan to incorporate at least one new strategy into each of your upcoming social studies units (one that fits the goals and enhances the development of the big ideas you have identified).

As you think about selecting approaches for specific units and lessons, we encourage you to begin with your goals and powerful ideas. Ask yourself, “What do I want my students to know? Understand? Appreciate? Apply to their lives?” Next ask, “Which teaching strategies best fit my intentions?” Most often there will be more than one viable strategy, and you should become familiar with a wide variety so that you can offer your students a range of possibilities with an eye toward balance. This is part of making teaching active, challenging, meaningful, integrative, and value based—the five qualities of powerful social studies teaching outlined by the National Council for the Social Studies.

Some techniques require you to exercise almost continuous direct influence over how information flows to your students. Others place much more responsibility for managing the instructional flow on the learners, with you as the teacher serving more as a guide. Most approaches represent mixed models, with the teacher and the learner shifting responsibilities.

As you plan your units and individual lessons, consider how students learn. For example, one way they learn is by direct experiences that incorporate the five senses: feeling, touching, tasting, smelling, and hearing. They also learn by acquiring knowledge through books, people, media, and so forth. A third way is through the personal construction of knowledge that occurs when they engage in thought processes that connect new experiences with prior knowledge and organize them in some way that is meaningful for them. Chapter 13 features homework connections that we view as powerful but underused venues for fostering memorable learning. Students can personalize in-school learning and organize it in ways that make sense to them by discussing it at home with family members.

Instructional strategies tend to feature three learning modalities through which learners receive, process, or respond to information (Ross, 1998). The most common involve expressing ideas audibly through sound (e.g., lectures, storytelling, music); expressing ideas visually using paintings, multimedia presentations, photos/pictures, artifacts, co-constructed diagrams, or graphic organizers; and expressing ideas kinesthetically through pantomiming, dramatic play, or dance. Many strategies use a combination of these modalities.

While goals should be your first concern when determining which strategy to select, the nature of the content and learner profiles are other factors to consider. As you build your own repertoire of strategies, you will find that often there is more than one approach that matches the goal and fits the content. Varying your approaches is usually a good thing because it helps maintain high interest in the subject area and accommodates the range of learners, but you need to think about students’ familiarity with the selected strategy. If you decide to use role play in a lesson introducing new decision-making skills, for example, make sure students have sufficient familiarity with role play. If they do not, you might consider introducing role play during a literacy lesson, using a familiar story as the content. Then students would be positioned to apply the skills in social studies lessons. As a rule of thumb, avoid trying to teach new skills and new content simultaneously.

Typically, you will start a new unit using strategies that call for direct experiences and knowledge acquisition, and then end the unit with strategies that call for students to construct knowledge personally and have more influence over the instructional flow. There are instances, however, when your goals might lead you to reverse the order. For example, to build interest and foster curiosity in an upcoming unit on Canada, you might begin with an inquiry lesson. You might show a collection of artifacts (e.g., flag,

coins, stamps, photos/pictures, maps) and pose the question, “How is Canada similar to and different from the United States?” After students speculate or offer hunches (also known as hypotheses), you would shift to knowledge acquisition. You might show a video, take a virtual field trip to a part of Canada, or assign some selected reading. You would then return to the hypotheses that students generated and determine which should be tentatively accepted and which should be rejected until further evidence is acquired. The key is to keep your eye on the goals and the powerful ideas to be developed. Some powerful ideas are: “Canada is a country in North America that has a great amount of physical space but a small population due to a variety of factors;” or “Canada has two national languages: English and French, a fact that reflects the country’s diversity.”

As the unit unfolds, you might include such instructional strategies as storytelling, debate, and simulation. At some point, you might have students study primary resources: the paintings of Cornelius Krieghoff, Robert Bateman, Emily Carr, and other prominent Canadian artists, and then discuss how the geography and history of Canada have influenced their work. At another point, you might have students debate the question, “Should or could the province of Quebec survive as an independent entity?” Students could study the history of Canada’s political system and study the effects of having such a large government for a relatively small population. They might also study the benefits and constraints of Canada’s health care system and explore whether the United States could adopt such a system, and then explain why or why not.

The unit might conclude with a travel brochure activity (with the “busy work” such as design being done at home). The goal would be for the students to synthesize what they learned about Canada and share the information with an authentic audience—preferably local travel agents or families interested in traveling to Canada. The ultimate goal would be to educate the adults about Canada’s unique features and convince them to put together a travel package and tour for interested community members. The students in the class could serve as assistant tour guides if distance is not an inhibitor and the trip is actually enacted.

It should be apparent from the range of strategies mentioned that the possibilities for a unit on Canada are endless. There are multiple resources to be tapped. The NCSS publication *Teaching about Canada and Mexico* (Joyce & Bratzel, 2006) is a goldmine for approaches and materials. It also provides content background for the teacher.

Bear in mind that you cannot depend on manuals supplied with the textbook series to determine which instructional approaches to use. You will need to assess suggested strategies to determine whether they offer sufficient educational value to merit inclusion in your unit. For judging strategies, consider the following questions:

- *Does the strategy match the goal?*
- *Does it promote learning of the big ideas that I am attempting to develop?*
- *Do the students have the necessary skills to be successful with the strategy?*
- *What roles will I need to play to help students construct the big ideas?*
- *How will I balance the teacher and the student role and function based on the students’ prior experiences, their familiarity with the content and skills, and the degree of dissonance they are experiencing?*
- *Across the unit, how will I accommodate the ways students learn: direct experience, acquired knowledge, and personally constructed knowledge?*
- *Across the unit, how will I vary the learning modalities to use those that fit the content most naturally?*

In the rest of this chapter, we will describe strategies that are appropriate for elementary social studies that represent auditory, visual, and physical modalities.



Strategy Teaching

Principle 9: Strategy Teaching: The teacher models and instructs students in learning and self-regulation strategies. Strategy teaching involves selecting an appropriate instructional practice for the knowledge and skills taught. The teacher can often “think aloud” while modeling the strategy. Strategy teaching is particularly effective for helping students reflect on their learning. Please see Chapter 14 for a more in-depth description of this principle.

Transmission

Until recently, most models of effective teaching emphasized the teacher as the dominant actor in the classroom: explaining content to students, checking their understanding, and then supervising their work on practice and application activities. The once widely disseminated model of Madeline Hunter (1984), for example, suggested that effective lessons contain the following elements:

1. Anticipatory set (prepare students to learn and focus on key ideas)
2. Objective and purpose (tell students the purpose of the lesson)
3. Input (provide them with new information)
4. Modeling (demonstrate skills or procedures)
5. Checking for understanding (through questions or requests for performance)
6. Guided practice (under direct teacher supervision)
7. Independent practice (once students know what to do and how to do it)

Hunter’s approach typifies what has become known as the *transmission view* of teaching and learning, or direct instruction. The following assumptions are implied in this view (Good & Brophy, 2003):

1. Knowledge is treated as a fixed body of information transmitted from teacher or text to students.
2. Teachers and texts are viewed as authoritative sources of expert knowledge to which students defer.
3. Teachers are responsible for managing students’ learning by providing information and leading the students through activities and assignments.
4. Teachers explain, check for understanding, and judge the correctness of students’ responses.
5. Students memorize or replicate what has been explained or modeled.
6. Classroom discourse emphasizes drill and recitation in response to convergent questions, with a focus on eliciting correct answers.
7. Activities emphasize replication of models or applications that require following step-by-step procedures.
8. Students work mostly alone, practicing what has been transmitted to them in order to prepare themselves to compete for rewards by producing it on demand.

The transmission view embodies some important principles of good teaching, especially in its emphasis on the role of the teacher in stimulating students’ motivation and

readiness for learning, providing them with needed information and modeling, structuring, and monitoring their learning experiences.

Lecturettes

An efficient and often appropriate means of communicating information to students (especially in terms of providing context or background knowledge) is through a lecturette. Often resource people (such as a museum staff member or a parent visiting the classroom) rely on lecturettes (a modified form of transmission) to convey new information. We prefer the term lecturette to lecture since for elementary students, a shorter period (ranging from five minutes for lower elementary students to twenty minutes for upper elementary students) is strongly suggested. However, lecturettes can go beyond the teacher or resource person standing in front of the students talking at them, without interaction with students. We recommend lecturettes that actively involve students by (1) posing questions throughout that require students to reflect on what they are learning; (2) having students picture in their heads the content of the lecturette; (3) inviting students to ask their own questions; (4) having them take notes on the main ideas of the lecturette; (5) having them turn to a partner in a think-pair-share activity related to the content of the lecturette; or (6) having students summarize what they learned. Engaging students mentally throughout the lessons is often referred to as minds-on-learning.

With advances in technology, there are a variety of ways you can present information through lecturettes in mentally engaging ways. Multimedia presentations or electronic storyboards (digital images accompanied by voice narration or music) are easy to create and can captivate students. Displaying images from the Internet (such as primary sources) to use as a springboard for a lecturette can be effective. You can be very creative with lecturettes by giving students minds-on tasks and stimulating their imagination. Just remember to stay focused on the powerful ideas you establish for student learning.

Demonstrating/Modeling

Demonstrating or modeling teaching can show students a process, skill, or understanding of content to accompany the telling (as in lecturettes). Social studies offers a number of opportunities for using demonstrations. For example, you can demonstrate to students how to create and interpret maps, interpret primary source materials, and make and use a budget. These kinds of demonstration strategies involve a fair amount of teacher-talk, but they also allow students to “see” the processes you engage in to accomplish the task. By “thinking out loud” (often referred to as metacognitive processing) through the steps you take, and even documenting each step on the board of chart paper, students can more easily grasp the processes you are following than were you simply to state them. The processes social scientists use are often best learned by students first observing the processes, then enacting the processes themselves.

Storytelling

Storytelling is a method of sharing our beliefs, traditions, and history with future generations. Rosen (1986) has suggested that the human brain is a narrative device that runs on stories. The knowledge that we store in our brain as part of our theory of the world is largely represented in the form of stories that are remembered far more easily than sequences of unrelated facts (Smith, 1988).

Stories and storytelling engage children and help them become personally interested in the past as well as the present. They help children realize how social studies is the study of people and their lives and not simply a parade of facts that they are expected

to memorize for a test. Biographies can be a useful resource for engaging children in personal stories about the past. Egan (1986) suggests that if teaching were regarded more as storytelling, the curriculum could become a collection of great stories of many cultures. This could make learning more engaging and likely to be remembered. Storytelling can be a powerful strategy when you select anecdotes that illustrate big ideas and general principles. Stories provide opportunities for children to make connections between their lives and those of people living in other times or places.

The stories can come from your own repertoire of personal experiences, from stories that have been passed down to you from previous generations, from children's literature, or from your own students. For example, if you were teaching about pioneer life, you might share stories that have been passed down through your ancestors about schools, curriculum and instruction, and approaches to discipline in the past. If you were teaching about the Great Depression, you might draw on what your ancestors have shared about their experiences with food and gasoline rationing or bartering among neighbors. Perhaps your family has letters, journals, or other artifacts to enhance the story about the stock market crash. If your class were studying social issues such as homelessness or hunger, you could draw on children's literature and retell stories such as *The Circuit* (Jimenez, 1997) or *Uncle Willie and the Soup Kitchen* (DiSalvo-Ryan, 1991). These stories depict elementary school children in stressful situations, in ways that promote empathy and cognitive understandings.

Hamilton and Weiss (1990) describe several learning processes that are supported by storytelling. These include listening, speaking, sharing ideas with others and accepting their reactions, and marshaling ideas and stories to address a specific problem or topic. Of prime importance, however, is the shared experience among classmates and the bonding that ensues and transcends gender, social class, and culture.

As you develop your social studies units and search for ways of helping students make meaning and connect with the content both cognitively and affectively, consider the use of stories and storytelling. They offer familiar narrative contexts that support learning and can be very engaging. Make sure that the goals and powerful ideas do not get lost in details and save enough time following the story for debriefing.

Investigation of Visuals

The old adage that “a picture is worth a thousand words” expresses the power of visuals, but alignment with the unit's goals is essential. For introducing new content, you might select visuals such as pictures or photographs to stimulate interest, foster speculation and hypothesizing, establish an anticipatory learning set, or link the new learning to prior learning (such as by providing students with opportunities to compare and contrast or make predictions from the old to the new).

For both lower and upper elementary students, visuals are critical for teaching social studies, and for history and geography in particular. Since one cannot “see the past,” children greatly benefit from studying visual resources such as historical paintings, photographs, and drawings. In geography lessons, children need to see maps, photographs, drawings, and paintings from various countries and cultures.

Criteria for selecting visuals for new learning include selecting those that promote curiosity (e.g., a montage of photos that illustrates changes in communication over time); illustrate sequences or connections (e.g., photos that illustrate the land-to-hand relationship of wool to cloth and the idea that pioneer clothing was made out of local resources); broaden the meaning and cast the familiar within a global and multicultural perspective (e.g., photos that depict a range of shelter types and construction materials to

underscore the idea that climate and culture, as well as availability of resources, influence the types of shelters that people build; photos to illustrate that children in various parts of the world dress more alike than different).

Another criterion for selecting visuals is connection to your students or their families. In a unit on family living, for example, photos illustrating family life in Japan and Vietnam would be desirable if you had students who were native to those countries. They would help your other students to appreciate diversity and its contributing factors in new ways.

Visuals should be large enough for the whole class to see. (If they are not, use multiple copies—one per table or group.) They also should be up-to-date and timely; simple rather than complicated; likely to promote depth of understanding rather than emphasizing minutia or the exotic; gender and culturally sensitive; and free of stereotypes, misconceptions, and fanciful representations.

Do not think of visuals merely as appealing or entertaining. Rather, think of them as enhancing opportunities for students to thoughtfully process, integrate, and apply curriculum content that is structured in goal-oriented ways and accompanied by a great deal of teacher-student discourse.

Investigation of Primary Historical Sources

Primary sources are materials created at or near the time of an event, person, idea, or movement being studied. Letters, diaries, documents, audio-recordings, and sheet music are examples of primary sources. They function as time machines by taking students back to faraway places and long-ago eras, making it easier for them to imagine the past and empathize about it. These first-hand examples are ideal for engaging the learners, stimulating higher-order thinking, and making the time or event more meaningful and memorable.

Your sources can be drawn from books that have compilations of primary sources within them. The sources might include documents (or parts of documents) such as the Declaration of Independence or the Constitution, original newspaper articles acquired from a local newspaper collection or online, or documents from government offices, individual businesses, or local museums. Residents in the community may also have deeds, journals, diaries, certificates, and other memorabilia to share. Perhaps least obvious, but extremely powerful, are materials you have in your possession such as your third-grade report card, your marriage certificate, your childhood diary, or a letter a family member wrote during military service.

The effectiveness of the primary source depends on its purpose, level of difficulty, and integration with other learning activities, but most importantly on how its use is structured around big ideas with potential for life application. Questions to be answered when examining primary sources should be developed in advance as a guide for gathering information and interpreting and establishing meaning. Sample questions include: Who wrote the source? When and why do you suppose it was written? What values are expressed in it? How does this source align with other sources being used—or does it? Why do you suppose this source was preserved? A host of other questions could be generated—but as a general rule, less is more, keeping your eye on the goal and intended outcomes.

An obstacle to using some text-based primary sources relates to the reading difficulty level. The language and sentence construction used in these documents is often unfamiliar and difficult for children. If the documents are handwritten, then the writing can be hard to decipher. Even if students are able to decode the writing in the documents, they may not be able to interpret the documents' meaning. However, these obstacles should not deter you from using primary sources. To modify primary sources for use in your classroom, you can use the original primary source accompanied by a translated version

in language your students will understand. You can highlight unfamiliar words and provide definitions in parentheses or provide a glossary. You can also read and discuss the documents as a class to help ensure all children grasp their meaning.

Examination of Artifacts

Artifacts are objects (such as tools or ornaments) that show human workmanship. They are products of civilization. They can be used as individual items to illustrate a point or show unique characteristics; they can be used in multiple numbers (such as a coin or stamp collection) to ground an inquiry lesson; or they can be used to display a range of objects and put together as an artifact kit to reflect characteristics of a group of people or items found in a certain type of environment. You can acquire commercially produced kits that focus on specific cultures; collect objects and create your own kits to focus on key ideas in your units; or ask your students to assemble kits representing major understandings being developed.

Artifacts add interest and meaning to content. If used as the heart of an inquiry lesson built around big ideas, they foster curiosity, sharpen observation skills, and stimulate speculation and higher-order thinking. Suppose you were studying money, and the general goals were to (1) pique students' interest in examining coins and bills up close and learning about them and how they are made; (2) develop an understanding and appreciation for the government's role in making money and controlling the amount that is in circulation; and (3) develop understanding and appreciation for the range of currencies that exist in the world, all of which are made very carefully and are exchangeable (Alleman & Brophy, 2003a). Showing a coin and bill collection could serve as a stimulus for unpacking some of the big ideas associated with the goals. In pairs or small table groups, students could examine the money, then as a class they could make a list of observations and questions (often cast as "I wonder ...").

Through interactive discussion, additional information provided by the teacher, exposure to informational texts, and perhaps some fact gathering on the Internet, the class could develop big ideas such as: every country has its official unit of currency; governments are in charge of making money and regulating the amount in circulation; and currencies can be exchanged for equivalent value because of agreements among countries. Artifacts can be an excellent choice for addressing some goals and powerful ideas, if the artifacts are appropriately contextualized and used as but one piece of the learning sequence.

Creative Dramatics

One of the most basic premises underlying this book is that social studies instruction will have limited meaning for children unless it affords them opportunities to become actively involved in learning experiences that engage their heads and hearts and apply to their lives. Various forms of creative dramatics can add an engaging dimension to social studies lessons and promote empathy. Among the most valuable strategies of this type include dramatic play, role play, simulation, and mock trials.

Dramatic Play

Unlike a drama, which has a story, characters, props, and scenery and is intended to be acted out on stage, dramatic play has no script, no stage (in the usual sense) and no formal scenery; it simply has actors (your students) and an established place in the classroom for the learning experience. Often props are available as the students engage in the strategy. Students simply act out roles that allow the teacher to determine what they

know, what misconceptions they might have, and what they wonder about. What children say and do as they act out the roles provides insights into the depth and quality of their learning and related feelings. Often, engaging students in dramatic play at the beginning of a unit stimulates their interest in the upcoming topic and allows you to do some foreshadowing during the class discussion that follows. Steps to follow for dramatic play include:

Arranging the environment. Establish a place in the classroom where dramatic play will occur. If, for example, you are about to embark on the study of clothing as a cultural universal, you might bring in a trunk of hats, shoes, play clothes, party clothes, work clothes, or outfits from around the world that are worn for special celebrations. If you are about to launch a unit on immigration, you might have visas, passports, maps, globes, health records, luggage, an official looking immigration officer uniform, currency from a range of countries, and so forth.

Play. Part of a designated class period could be set aside for students to try on and talk about the clothes or manipulate the props. Before you begin the play period, establish “ground rules” and share what you want the students to do and why. During the dramatic play period, look and listen as the students participate. On occasion, ask a question or engage individuals in conversations. One goal of dramatic play is to encourage students to have a vicarious experience that raises new questions that lead to further investigations.

Discussion. The debriefing that follows should examine what students felt, thought about, or were confused about as they engaged in the strategy. Typically a list of questions or “I wonders” sets the stage for upcoming lessons. Listing students’ “I wonders” and noting misconceptions serve to inform future planning.

Research and future lessons. Depending on the age group and the topic under study, individuals, groups, or a combination of the teacher and groups will engage in research on questions and misconceptions that surfaced during the dramatic play. Typically, the results of the dramatic play comprise only a few of the big ideas for the unit.

Role Play

In contrast to dramatic play, role play tends to be more carefully organized and sequenced and allows the students to grapple with a problem situation and resolve it. In role playing, a few students enact a situation while the rest of the class act as observers. How a role-playing group resolves a problem—whether it be a decision about buying a bicycle (new or used, how to pay for it) or a decision about what to do if you witnessed a shoplifter while shopping in a toy store—becomes the focus for discussion and analysis after the enactment is completed. Role-playing situations are open-ended, and the role players are asked to figure out how to resolve the situation.

The technique is often useful for helping students to develop a sense of social consciousness or to experience what it is like to “walk in another person’s moccasins” and to view a problem from another person’s perspective (Berman & Sheldon, 1990).

In *Role Playing in the Curriculum*, Shaftel and Shaftel (1982) recommend nine steps for role play activities:

1. “Warming up” the group—setting the stage, identifying the problem to be resolved
2. Selecting the participants (For the early grades, it is usually a good idea to have the teacher as an active participant in the role play.)
3. Preparing the audience to participate as observers (Establish with the observers what to look for, listen for, or think about).

4. Setting the stage (During this time, the role players should briefly plan what they are going to do. Since there is no script or predetermined answer, this should take only a few minutes. It merely involves the general line of action that is to occur. Steps 3 and 4 usually occur simultaneously. While the role players are planning, the teacher prepares the audience).
5. Role play enacting
6. Discussing the enactment
7. Further enacting (It is not necessary for every child to participate in an enactment. In fact, when this occurs the strategy usually loses its effectiveness because students must invent things to be different and the result is silliness and is not cost-effective).
8. Further discussing
9. Generalizing

The debriefing/discussions and overall attention to the goals and big ideas are the keys to role play as an effective strategy. If used appropriately, it can enhance literacy skills and underscore the importance of thinking through decisions because they are usually multifaceted and do not have a single right answer.

Simulations

Simulations place students in situations that closely parallel those found in the real world. They simplify reality for the purpose of highlighting key ideas. The object is for each participant to make decisions and experience the consequences. The popularity of personal computers has enhanced the appeal of simulations. The California Gold Rush and Oregon Trail are two popular simulations for the middle grades that add a “real-world” dimension to instruction that many students find highly motivating.

If a class were studying conflict and the concept of territoriality, the “Road Game” could be a powerful learning opportunity. This simulation involves teams of participants competing to build roads through each other’s land. It helps students recognize how conflicts develop as groups or nations pursue their own goals. Simulations, if properly selected, can go a long way in “making meaning” that includes empathy.

A simulation developed by Bob Peterson titled “Building Miniature Houses—Simulating Inequality,” helps students develop understandings about global injustice. In this simulation, students are placed into several groups, each of which is assigned the same task (to construct a house) but given different (and unequal) resources (Bigelow & Peterson, 2002, pp. 71–72). After building their houses, as a class students compare the houses and evaluate them according to a set of criteria (e.g., durability, strength, and aesthetics). Students then participate in a discussion about the activity itself and the unequal distribution of resources across the globe.

After you have decided that a specific simulation is the best way to accomplish your goals and develop the big ideas to ensure maximum effectiveness, you should follow a basic sequence. It includes overview, training, activity, and debriefing. In the overview phase, you introduce your students to the simulation—the goal, the challenges it presents, what you are trying to resolve, and so forth. You assign the roles and lay out the rules to be followed.

During the training phase, you “walk through” the steps and confront potential problems. If the simulation requires groups, you work through both individual and group issues. Allow time for questions. Some teachers prefer to conduct a pre-training session with a select group of students, who then serve as mentors during the class training session.

The simulation takes place during the activity phase. Your role as the teacher depends on the age level of the students, the complexity of the simulation, and the degree to which your students encounter difficulties. As the students gain confidence, your role shifts from clarifier to discussant to coach, and then finally to observer. Sometimes

teachers interrupt the simulation to provide students with opportunities to reflect on their actions and the strategic moves they have been making.

At the conclusion of the simulation, it is important to facilitate a debriefing discussion that addresses the conclusions or generalizations acquired, the strategies that were most effective, and what was learned about people's behavior under the conditions provided by the simulation. With simulations it is critical that students understand that the simulation they experience is only an *approximation* of the experience of the real participants in the event or situation being simulated. Through a simulation alone, children cannot know what it is like to be discriminated against, to be enslaved, and so forth. (Of course, some of your students may very well understand the realities of the conditions being simulated from their life experience, but many students may not.)

Mock Trials

Enactments of trials include an element of competition that often stimulates high levels of student enthusiasm. Typically they are used in upper elementary grades during the study of government, with specific attention to the legal system. They tend to take a lot of time, and the logistics often overshadow the development of big ideas. If a mock trial is the best approach for your goals, consider having students complete much of the work outside of class. The mock trial involves three stages:

Preparation. Introduce students to the purpose of a mock trial. Use fact sheets that explain information associated with both sides of the disputed issue. Next, identify the roles needed, assign them to individual members of the class, and provide these students with specific information about their responsibilities. Allocate time for students to engage in research in preparation for the trial.

Enactment. Savage and Armstrong (2004) provide a comprehensive explanation of how to set up mock trials, including the following sequence for the enactment:

- Opening of the court
- Opening statements by attorneys, with the prosecuting attorney going first and the defense attorney following
- Witnesses for the prosecution, with cross-examination by the defense attorney
- Witnesses for the defense, with cross-examination by the prosecuting attorney
- Closing arguments, with the defense going first
- Jury deliberations
- The verdict and adjournment

During each step, the clerk and judge make certain routine statements. You may want to give a basic script to the students playing the roles so the enactment more closely resembles a real court session.

Debriefing. During the debriefing, the big ideas are revisited and the general trial process is reexamined (to counteract students' tendency to focus only on the verdict).

Co-Constructing Learning Resources

This is a strategy in which the teacher and students work together to construct classroom resources such as maps, charts, graphs, or lists of big ideas as lessons unfold. This approach reduces dependence on commercially produced materials that often are narrow in scope, too "busy" (crammed with too much information), or likely to create misconceptions. Co-constructed materials have the handmade look of children's projects, and

yet their logic and construction reveals the involvement of an adult (Alleman, Brophy, & Knighton, 2003).

Interactive timelines are examples of co-construction. Imagine yourself sharing a narrative with students about shelters in the cave days. Using a large sheet of paper and drawing a line horizontally to represent time, you could present through narrative big ideas, facts, humor, and appropriate drama as a way to establish a rich chronological story. Artifacts, cut-out pictures, drawings, and teacher sketches (visuals preferred by many students) engender a sense for the way things were for a specific time period and pave the way for explaining how and why things changed.

Teaching about developments in transportation, for example, can be built around a timeline that begins with people traveling by foot and is structured around key inventions such as boats, wheeled vehicles, and engine-powered vehicles. Again, cut-out pictures, drawings, and teacher sketches serve as visual prompts during your presentation or an interactive narrative. This helps students realize that innovations such as dugout canoes for early water transportation were significant advances achieved through creative use of available resources. After constructing a rich knowledge base through the use of stories and interactive discussion, students can make their own timelines. They will still use the co-constructed one as a guide as well as a visual prompt for the narratives that they may be asked to write in their journals.

Another example of co-construction involves *graphing*. Instead of trying to teach graphing skills using arbitrary information (data for use in that exercise only), you can co-create a graph that aligns with your social studies lesson and guide the content and accuracy of the visual representation.

Sequence charts or *class-made books* are other examples. Suppose you were teaching the land-to-hand steps in the story of bread. As you initially teach the sequence, you can create the chart as a class, using the language of your students. During quiet reading time or independent work time, students will feel at ease in reading the co-constructed resource and drawing on the familiar words for their journal writing to be included in the class book.

When teachers and students co-construct a resource based on the big ideas in the lesson, it benefits both parties in several ways: Students feel energized and involved (as opposed to feeling passive or forced); they participate in the lesson and engage the content (since they are using what they have learned to create something new); and they render the content in their own words (making it easier for them to understand, remember, and work with later). The teacher relates to students as a member of the learning community (rather than only as an authority figure who stands alone and apart). Finally, both teacher and students have a visual display that they can use in the future (for reference, review, and example).

While co-construction might initially seem like a strategy for the early grades, we have observed it used in upper grades with tremendous success. It is engaging and it particularly benefits students who have difficulty focusing or have challenges with language, spelling, and the like.

Field Trips

Field trips allow for direct experiential learning at sites within walking or short commuting distance from the school. Unfortunately, budgetary and liability concerns have reduced the frequency of field trips in recent years. However, the Internet has made it possible for students to take virtual field trips without leaving the school. Sometimes museums also have “traveling exhibitions” whereby museum artifacts can be delivered to the classroom for exploration and study.

Many social studies units can be enriched through content-related field trips. For example, when studying the community and investigating the types of shelters available

and the building materials that are used, one of the best ways to learn would be to walk around the neighborhood and observe first hand single versus multiple dwellings, apartments, duplexes, condominiums, and manufactured homes and the resources used to construct them.

The scope of the observations should be limited and focused. When studying local shelters, for example, it is not a good idea to meander from the goals and look at the types of vehicles parked in the driveways, the numbers of dogs and cats observed, or the objects on the lawns. Similarly, if you are planning a trip to a local museum as part of your study of the lifestyles of Native Americans from your area, spending time in the geological section focusing on the rock collection would be a distraction. Guidelines to follow for field trips include the following:

- Embed the learning opportunity within the context of the unit.
- Clearly establish the purpose or goal of the field trip.
- Make all the necessary preliminary arrangements and visit the site prior to taking your class. Anticipate potential challenges or distractions.
- Prepare the class for the field trip. One way is to conduct a TWL activity: “What do we think we know about this? What do we want to find out?” Afterward, address “What did we learn?” Another approach is to have students predict what they will see on the field trip.
- As a class, prepare:

(A)	(B)	(C)
What will we see?	How it (they) will appear.	What we observed.
- Hold students accountable. You expect them to learn from the experience.
- Engage the students in appropriate follow-up activities. It is usually a good idea to have your students retrieve data on site and record it for later discussion. With young children, provide volunteers with forms for keeping track of information and recording students’ responses. Older students can do their own note taking individually or in groups. Back in the classroom, revisit the information in order to clear up any misconceptions and underscore big ideas. Typically, field trip data are not adequately harvested. Follow-up activities should go beyond drawing pictures and writing thank-you notes.

Many potential field trip sites would be nice to visit but are too costly or have other constraints, such as schedules or numbers of observers allowed. Encourage families to visit them during out-of-school time (e.g., gathering specific data during the next trip to the supermarket or credit union, or eliciting adult volunteers to take their children to an evening meeting of the school board or township and reporting their “findings” to the whole class).

Case Method

A case study is an intense examination of an event, person, or thing. In social studies, it can act as a way to help students see the personal and human aspects of a culture, of a historical period, or the relationship of a historical document, such as the Declaration of Independence or the U.S. Constitution, to a contemporary issue. For example, upper elementary and middle school students typically study U.S. history. The U.S. Constitution and the Bill of Rights outlined basic values that continue to serve as criteria for judging the adequacy of our laws and actions. Students could be presented with a case focusing on the right to privacy as related to such areas as the Internet, wiretapping, televised surveillance of public places, or searches of school lockers, with the goal being to understand the legal issues related to the case and how they apply today and begin to realize that many legal issues involve a clash between two (or more) rights. Students can get a glimpse of how the courts balance rights and responsibilities and reach a decision.

The local bar association could be an excellent source for securing a speaker to address the judicial power of the Supreme Court. For example, if your class were examining the rights of people accused of committing crimes, you might ask the resource person to explain the *Miranda vs. Arizona* case, which requires the police to inform the arrested person of his/her rights, including the right to remain silent, or the *Gideon vs. Wainwright* case, which guarantees defendants subject to jail sentences the right to legal counsel. Generally speaking, the case approach is most powerful when it emphasizes contemporary issues. Linking classic cases to the here and now has potential for enhancing meaning and for helping students realize that court decisions are informed by policies, laws, and past practices. Guidelines to follow when using the case study approach include:

- Introduce the case.
- Identify the basic facts and explain the unfamiliar terms.
- Pose the key questions related to the case that link to the goals and big ideas.
- Allow time for students to study the case individually or discuss in small groups.
- Conduct a whole-class discussion.
- Debrief to encourage your students to evaluate their reasoning by comparing their thinking to that of their peers as well as the judge who may have decided the case in a real court of law. Make sure the students adequately summarize and understand the relevant key ideas—for example, if the case were about privacy, the legal principles related to that right.

Many commercial sources of cases are prepared for classroom use. *Real-World Investigations for Middle and High School Social Studies* (Hoge, 2004), for example, contains a host of cases that can be adapted for use in the elementary grades. One is titled “Mandatory School Uniforms,” which fits nicely with a government unit. It provides a real-world exploration of power, authority, and governance.

A tried-and-true case method lesson sequence is called “No Vehicles in the Park.” This lesson involves a fictitious town (Beautifica) that has an ordinance, “No Vehicles in the Park.” Students read various scenarios of town residents using a vehicle in the park (e.g., children riding bicycles, a father jogging with his baby in a stroller, and the sanitation department driving garbage trucks to pick up trash) and determine whether the action in the scenario is a violation of the ordinance. Taking on the roles of plaintiffs, defendants, and judges, students grapple with whether these scenarios violate the spirit of the law (and in so doing, learn to distinguish between the letter of the law and the spirit of the law). This lesson sequence could be incorporated into a unit on community or government. See the following website for directions for this case method lesson sequence, which is adapted from Citizen Education in the Law, Seattle, from *Street Law: A Course in Practical Law* (McMahon, & Arbetman, 2004): www.courts.wa.gov/education/lessons/index.cfm

Debate

Debate is a strategy used to highlight an issue by focusing attention on differing viewpoints. The positions individuals take during the debate often reveal the depth of their understanding of the issues.

Debate is rarely used in elementary classrooms, for various reasons including lack of time. Social studies and literacy standards, however, call for students to learn to state a position and provide supporting evidence. These experiences pave the way for adult opportunities to actively engage in public debates related to civic action pursuits or politics. As such, debate can play an important role in elementary social studies.

Students can get very excited about subject matter that lends itself to taking a position and engaging in spirited discourse. When teaching U.S. history, for example, as part of reviewing the contributions of past leaders a question for debate might be, “Which leader had the greatest impact and why?” A class studying the Revolutionary period might be asked to debate the question: “Was the war justified? Why or why not? Provide evidence and cite examples to support your position.” Another class studying individual rights and responsibilities might debate: “Should our school enforce a dress code that calls for uniforms? Provide evidence and cite reasons for your recommendation.” If you had just completed a unit on a state or region and were launching a unit focusing on another state or region, you might ask students to decide which state or region would be the better location for beginning a designated type of business.

Preparing for a debate is an excellent way for students to sort through the issues and get clearer about what they think. Sometimes you might designate the position students must take in order to force them to grapple with both sides of the issue. Other times, especially if the class is divided in its position, you might allow students to stay with the view they initially favor. In either case, the task is to provide evidence, through research and concrete examples, that their position is more defensible.

Debates can be carried out in a group format, with each group responsible for gathering data to support its position. Group leaders should be designated to facilitate the preparation. Spokespersons for each side will present their arguments. A large group discussion should follow. Key points to keep in mind in scaffolding a debate include:

1. Establish classroom norms for civil discourse during the debate.
2. The question or debate issue should be stated clearly, specifically, and pointedly.
3. Each debate team should thoughtfully, and with adequate documentation, prepare its position.
4. Some class time should be allotted for exploration of the issue, gathering appropriate information, and preparing for the formal presentation, but students should work on their position outside of class as well.
5. Usually one class period is adequate for the debate. Time allotments for the speakers should be enforced.
6. Speakers should not be interrupted, but open discussion can follow immediately after all positions have been expressed.
7. Debating tactics should remain secondary to clear and forthright presentations of points of view and substantiation of claims. Examples to illustrate can add credibility to the position.

Inquiry

Inquiry teaching, in one form or another, has been around for a long time. In fact, in John Dewey’s classic book *How We Think* (1910), he outlined the basic steps of inquiry teaching that are still followed in principle. These steps include describing the key features of a problem or situation, suggesting possible explanations or solutions, gathering evidence that can be used to test the accuracy of the explanations or solutions, evaluating the solutions or explanations, and developing tentative conclusions. There are different approaches to teaching inquiry. We build upon the steps Banks (1990) outlined and offer suggestions for implementing the strategy.

- (1) Ask a question for inquiry. Sometimes students may come up with their own question for inquiry with your assistance, although you can also come up with the question on your own. Note: this should be an empirical question that can be researched (although

not always answered, if the evidence is inconclusive) using data. Questions that are ethical in nature (that usually start with “should”) are not appropriate questions for inquiry and instead should be reserved for discussion or debate.

- (2) Pose a hypothesis to the question. Students should attempt to answer the question posed using their prior knowledge or logical reasoning. Students may pose different hypotheses, which you could label Hypothesis A, Hypothesis B, and so forth. Encourage them to draw upon what they know about the topic, to make an analogy, if relevant, and to use logic. Remind students that all hypotheses are valued, and that it is important to be open-minded to the fact that any of the proposed hypotheses are plausible.
- (3) Gather and analyze data related to the question. Generally, we suggest gathering the data for students because you will have better and easier access to high-quality, relevant resources, and you can screen them for readability by students. For students in the upper grades, however, you do not have to provide as much structure if they are able to do Internet searches or investigations (e.g., surveys, interviews) on their own. However, we suggest you continue to be involved in the data-collection process to ensure students are moving in a direction that will allow them to draw sound conclusions. Help students analyze the data. We suggest providing graphic organizers to help students with the data analysis.
- (4) Determine whether to accept or reject the hypotheses. Have students return to the hypotheses posed and determine whether the evidence collected supports or refutes the hypotheses. As part of this step, students could make their tentative findings public by creating a poster or presentation describing the inquiry process and the new knowledge gleaned.

Inquiry connotes “minds-on” learning—asking questions and exploring possibilities. It requires pulling ideas apart and putting them back together. It can be used at all grade levels; however, more guidance is needed in the early grades. While many experts characterize inquiry teaching as student-centered, we believe that it requires balance for it to be effective, with the teacher playing an active role throughout the process. We present some examples of questions for inquiry from a cross-section of disciplines. We remind you that “answering” the question for inquiry is not the goal; instead the focus should be on the process of inquiry.

Historical Inquiry: The Jamestown Colony. You can help students explore possible explanations for the failure of Jamestown using both primary and secondary source materials. Students can corroborate an account with other accounts and evaluate the credibility of sources in their inquiry of what caused the colony’s failure. See the H.S.I. (Historical Scene Investigations) website for resources for this and other historical inquiries: web.wm.edu/hsi/cases.html.

Political Science Inquiry: Presidential Elections. There is a saying, “as goes Maine, so goes the nation” with regard to U.S. presidential elections. Using electoral and popular election political maps (available on the Internet), have students chart states’ voting patterns over time compared to the results of national elections. Students could pursue the question, “Since 1952, which state is the best predictor of the outcomes of presidential elections?” Students could also answer questions related to the electoral college and the popular vote.

Economic Inquiry: Specialization. Students can pursue the following question: “How does specialization and division of labor increase productivity?” through examination of a variety of kinds of data. They could interview factory owners or employees to learn first-hand how division of labor leads to higher production. To generate their own data for analysis, students could participate in a simulation where half the class makes a product (such as a birthday card) and each student performs all the steps involved (as in craft industry) and half the class makes a product through an assembly line (where each student

performs one assigned step or task). After a certain amount of time, the two groups could compare how many cards each group created and discuss how specialization and division of labor influenced the results. Students could also discuss the economic benefits of an assembly line as well as the tradeoffs (e.g., creativity and craftsmanship).

Geographical Inquiry: *Development of Cities.* Students can pursue the following question: “How do physical characteristics explain where cities develop?” For data, you can gather a series of “case studies” of U.S. cities that explain their history and show their physical geography. Through their analysis, students will learn, for example, that cities often develop on waterways for purposes of trade, transportation, and defense.

Summary

Because of the diversity of social studies content, the subject lends itself to a broad range of teaching strategies in addition to the ones discussed in earlier chapters. Presentation of content can be enriched through lecturettes and demonstrations, storytelling and the use of visuals, and investigation of primary historical sources and artifacts. A particularly useful strategy in the elementary grades is teacher and student co-construction of learning resources, such as timelines, maps, charts, graphs, or lists of big ideas. Other sources of enrichment include several forms of creative dramatics (dramatic play, role play, simulations, and mock trials). Field trips and case studies provide opportunities for in-depth study of particular examples of concepts or principles emphasized in a unit. Debates provide an engaging way for students to learn and think about enduring issues, especially those that involve conflicts between basic rights or principles

of justice. Inquiry activities call for students to conduct research on a problem or issue, then synthesize the obtained information and develop a well-argued tentative conclusion or position. When used appropriately, these strategies make social studies more powerful by enriching its content base and engaging students in synthesis, analysis, evaluation, or other higher-order thinking about the content.

Think carefully about your selection of teaching strategies to ensure they match your goals, promote understanding of the big ideas, are at the appropriate level of difficulty, do not call for the development of new content and skills simultaneously, and are cost effective in terms of time and trouble. Using a variety of strategies over time acknowledges diversity and establishes the groundwork for an interesting, engaging, and meaningful social studies program.

Reflective Questions

1. What strategies do you consider most challenging for students? Why? For teachers? Why?
2. Imagine you are encouraged by your school leader to consider incorporating all of the strategies described in this chapter over the course of the school year. How would you build them into your long-range plans?
3. How would you enliven a lecturette to engage students?
4. Debate and role play are examples of strategies that have been around for a long time, yet they do not typically occur in social studies. How would you explain this? Where might these strategies be used in your curriculum?
5. Co-constructing resources is a relatively recent strategy being used during social studies. What do you see as advantages? Disadvantages? How might you address them?
6. Storytelling, sometimes considered a disappearing art, is resurfacing as a powerful strategy for promoting memorable learning. What do you view as its inherent challenges? How will you overcome them in order to incorporate this powerful strategy into your repertoire?
7. Teachers often associate storytelling with the early grades. What modifications, if any, would you propose for fourth through eighth graders? What are content examples where storytelling could be particularly beneficial and why?
8. Describe an optimal inquiry lesson. Be sure you include the roles and responsibilities for both students and the teacher. What makes the lesson exceptional?

Your Turn: Strategies for Teaching Elementary Social Studies

Study an upcoming social studies unit carefully with an eye toward adding at least one new strategy that will potentially make the learning experience more memorable for your students. Ask yourself the following questions to ensure that you have made an intelligent choice:

- *What strategy, if added, could enhance understanding of the selected set of big ideas?*
- *Does the strategy match the goals and is it appropriate for the content I have selected?*
- *Do the students have the necessary skills to be successful with the strategy?*
- *What unique features does the selected strategy have—and have I adequately addressed them?*
- *Have I clearly thought through my role and function as the teacher? Students' roles and functions?*
- *Have I mentally mapped the steps/procedures that need to be followed?*
- *How can I describe what the strategy will look like to an outsider when in process in my classroom?*
- *What sorts of behaviors and understandings do I expect my students to acquire as the result of the selected strategy?*

HOW CAN I DESIGN, IMPLEMENT, AND EVALUATE INSTRUCTIONAL ACTIVITIES?

TEACHER VOICE

Michael Adams, First-Year Teacher

In an educational system that constantly strives for standardization and measurable results, it is easy to lose sight of the big picture. Canned curriculums, basal readers, and standardized tests are all evidence of a growing trend that equates setting standards with homogenization and standardization. But when 7-year-old Thomas asks you, his teacher, why he needs to learn how to read a map when his parents have a GPS, it becomes pretty clear that these canned programs don't have all the answers. The truth is, knowledge does not come wrapped in cellophane. There is no such thing as a ready-made education, just as there are no two children who are exactly alike. It takes careful planning and thoughtful crafting to create content and activities that will be memorable to a wide range of students.

The authors of this book approach this chapter with the understanding that education and teaching are not measured in the number of worksheets assigned and completed, but rather in a student's lifelong relationship with knowledge, meant for a world beyond the classroom. In this chapter, Brophy, Alleman, and Halvorsen encourage you not just to ask what you want your students to have learned, but to envision what they should be able to *do* as the result of a lesson. After all, skills that can be applied to many different situations are often based on ideas, rather than driven by easily forgotten facts. When feeling overwhelmed by the details of lesson planning, I find stepping back to

examine the purpose of the lesson useful. Do I want my students to be able to read any map they come across, or do I want them to reason why physical characteristics of places contribute to the culture of a community? Once I narrow down what I want my students to take away from the lesson, not just for the assessment but for the rest of their lives, I can more clearly determine how to construct classroom activities. And designing varied activities that have such dynamic applications help achieve long-term outcomes, not just a neat answer on a fill-in-the-blank exercise.

One of the most useful aspects of this chapter includes the tools not only for designing an activity, but also for evaluating its effectiveness. As a new teacher, I found it helpful to examine my lessons using the criteria outlined by the authors. If you're coming to this chapter with the expectation of getting ready-made activities for your social studies classroom, you will not find them. Instead, the authors ask you to think critically about your activities: Do they match the goals? Are they the appropriate level of difficulty? Are they cost effective in terms of time and trouble? Are they feasible?

In one of our studies (Alleman & Brophy, 1993–94), we asked preservice teachers in senior-level social studies methods classes to reflect on their elementary-school social studies experiences. For each of three grade ranges (K–3, 4–6, and 7–8), we asked them to identify at least one activity that they remembered clearly and to explain what they learned from it. Following is what was written by a preservice teacher who apparently experienced a relatively barren K–8 social studies curriculum:

Powerful/Memorable Activity	Explanation of What You Learned
Grades K–3 (No memory)	(No statement of learning)
Fourth Grade We wrote letters to a specific state (Texas) and requested information about that state. When we got the information we wrote reports and drew the flag, flower, and so on.	I learned how to write a formal letter, learned a great many facts about Texas, and learned from other students' posters and reports.
Seventh Grade We used maps and grease pencils to learn geography, latitude, and longitude. For every chapter, we had to read and outline it.	I learned how to locate places by reading maps and using lines of latitude and longitude. I learned to outline.
Eighth Grade We had to research a particular subject and write a report on it. My topic was the Holocaust.	I learned how to use the library and to find research materials.

The next preservice teacher's memories were typical in most respects, except that she reported a cultural unit rather than a First Thanksgiving activity at the K–3 level.

Powerful/Memorable Activity	Explanation of What You Learned
<p>First Grade</p> <p>We did a unit on the Hopi Indians. I remember that we did a little program for the parents because I got to be the narrator and had the most lines. I thought this was because I was the best reader.</p>	<p>I don't remember anything about the play or what I read. All I remember is that the Hopi did not live in tipis like I thought all Indians did at that time.</p>
<p>Grades 4–6</p> <p>I can faintly remember doing a report on a European country. Each person chose a country and researched it, then turned in a written report and presented an oral report to the class.</p>	<p>I studied Belgium. I learned what flax was and that it was one of Belgium's main resources.</p>
<p>Seventh Grade</p> <p>By seventh grade I had a strong dislike for social studies and my teacher did not help one bit. All we did in his class were worksheets that were multiple choice.</p>	<p>(No statement of learning)</p>
<p>Eighth Grade</p> <p>At one point we did a report on a president. I chose Andrew Jackson just because I liked the name. We had to research the president and then write a research report.</p>	<p>I found out that Jackson wasn't that great of a guy after all. I didn't find out about any of the other presidents, though, because no one shared with the class the information we gathered.</p>

Our third example is from someone who reported unusually rich activities and learning outcomes:

Powerful/Memorable Activity	Explanation of What You Learned
<p>Third Grade</p> <p>We learned about economics by dividing into groups and "selling" supplies. Each group of sellers was also purchasers. Each buyer was given a different amount of money to simulate different income levels. Groups would set prices based on the competition. In the end, results were recorded and the class discovered how high and low prices and purchasing power had affected obtaining supplies.</p>	<p>Through this activity I learned how prices are set (competition), how high and low prices affect the supply of the seller and the demand of the buyer, and how income level affects what and how much a person can buy.</p>
<p>Grades 4–6</p> <p>Create a country. We were required (at year end) to integrate what we had learned about government, monetary systems, cultures, and geography to create our own country with currency, government, and so on. All had to be workable but could be unique.</p>	<p>This project taught me how interrelated and complex the components of society are. For example, geography determines climate and growing conditions. This in turn affects imports and exports, which then affects the economy.</p>
<p>Eighth Grade</p> <p>We viewed several movies on Nazi Germany and the treatment of Jews. Each movie was very graphic, portraying the true horrors. We then had to write about the impact we thought these atrocities had on history and the Jewish community.</p>	<p>I learned that history is not just past events' determiners and predictors of the future. I remember experiencing social studies emotionally and not just intellectually. This made learning history a completely different experience.</p>

Before reading further, try this exercise yourself. In your textbook, pencil in your responses. What activities do you remember from elementary social studies? What do you think these activities were intended to teach you? What did you actually learn from them? What do your responses imply concerning your own ideas about good versus poor learning activities?

We will return to these examples and summarize the findings from our study at the end of this chapter. First, however, we will offer our principles and suggestions for selecting and implementing learning activities.

In previous chapters we underscored the importance of using major social studies education purposes and goals to guide planning, but we also noted that such goal-oriented planning is not often evident in the content found in textbooks or in the recitation-dominant discourse patterns observed in classrooms. We suggested that the way to improvement lies in focusing content development more clearly around powerful ideas associated with social understanding and civic efficacy goals.

We continue with these themes in the present chapter. We use the term *activities* to refer to the full range of classroom tasks, activities, and assignments—anything that students are expected to do in order to learn, apply, practice, evaluate, or in any other way respond to curricular content. Activities may call for speech (answer questions, participate in discussion, debate, or role play), writing (short answers, longer compositions, research reports), or goal-directed action (conduct inquiry, solve problems, construct models or displays). Activities may be done either in or out of the classroom (i.e., as homework); in whole-class, small-group, or individual settings; and under close and continuing teacher supervision or largely independently (on one's own or in collaboration with peers). Activities are differentiated from strategies, which are broader and represent instructional approaches such as inquiry, storytelling, simulations, and so forth.

Our research has addressed fundamental questions about the nature and roles of learning activities: What are the intended functions of various types of activities? What is known about the mechanisms through which they perform these functions (if they do)? What is it about ideal activities that make them so good? What faults limit the value of less ideal activities? What principles might guide teachers' planning and implementation of activities?

Opportunity to Learn and Practice and Application Activities

Principle 2: Opportunity to Learn: Students learn more when most of the available time is allocated to curriculum-related activities and the classroom management system emphasizes maintaining students' engagement in those activities. Since the more time spent on instruction, the more children learn, activities for use in instruction should be selected carefully. The activities should be stimulating and challenging, and aligned with the powerful goals and content. *Principle 7: Practice and Application Activities: Students need sufficient opportunities to practice and apply what they are learning, and to receive improvement-oriented feedback.* Activities should incorporate opportunities for students to refine their knowledge and skills through practice. However, such practice should come in the form of varied tasks so that the students have opportunities to refine their knowledge in different contexts and different formats. Please see Chapter 14 for a more in-depth description of these principles.

Our work on activities began with a critique of two elementary social studies series (Brophy & Alleman, 1992). This work reaffirmed frequently voiced complaints about the activities components of these series, such as that too many of the activities were fill-in-the-blank worksheets or involved practicing skills independently of the content developed in a unit (instead of using the skills to apply that content in natural ways). Our analyses also pointed to several additional problems: activities often were built around peripheral content rather than key ideas, were built around misrepresentations of content, were too cumbersome or time-consuming to justify the trouble it would take to implement them, or ostensibly provided for integration across subjects but in reality did not promote progress toward significant goals in either subject. In subsequent work, we developed a framework for thinking about learning activities.

The Nature and Functions of Learning Activities

Our position on learning activities has been influenced by the ideas outlined in earlier chapters; the work of John Dewey, Hilda Taba, Ralph Tyler, and other major curriculum theorists; and the work of other authors who have been influenced by them. Zais (1976), for example, stated that the primary standard for the selection of learning activities should be how well the activities contribute to students' attainment of curricular goals. Other criteria for good activities were that they provide for the attainment of multiple goals, engage students in active forms of learning, help them to develop values and critical thinking capacities, are built around important content, and are well matched to students' abilities and interests.

Fraenkel (1980) similarly suggested that good activities feature justifiability (serve goal-related purposes); multiple foci (further progress toward multiple goals such as knowledge, thinking, skills, and attitudes); open-endedness (encourage a variety of responses rather than just retrieval of answers to closed questions); potential for increasing self-confidence in ability to learn (encourage students to inquire, think for themselves, or solve problems); sequential structure (build on what came before and prepare for what will come later); transferability of acquired knowledge (enable students to apply what they have learned to new or different situations); and variety (suitable mixture of intake, organization, demonstration, and expression/creation activities).

Raths (1971) suggested that activities should provide opportunities for students to make informed choices about how to carry out tasks and to reflect on the consequences of their choices later; play active rather than passive roles as learners; engage in inquiry into key ideas, apply important intellectual processes, or address personal or social policy problems rather than just learn factual information; work with actual objects rather than just read about them or view pictures of them; examine or apply a previously learned idea in a new setting; examine topics or issues that citizens in our society do not normally examine; take intellectual risks; rewrite, rehearse, or polish initial efforts; share the planning or carrying out of an activity with peers; address their own expressed purposes; or assess their work using criteria drawn from relevant disciplines. He also suggested that an activity would be more worthwhile to the extent that it could be accomplished successfully by children operating at different levels of ability.

We have built on these lists and other writings on activities in four ways. We have: (1) expanded them to include additional principles; (2) grouped the principles according to priority levels; (3) distinguished principles that apply to each individual activity from principles that apply only to groups of activities considered as sets; and

(4) added principles describing how teachers might structure and scaffold activities for their students.

When designing instructional activities, ask yourself, do they provide for (1) active learning? (2) application of intellectual processes? and (3) opportunities to work with actual objects?

Basic Assumptions about Ideal Curricula

Our position is rooted in certain assumptions about key features of ideal curricula. Most of these assumptions reflect basic principles that are commonly stated in curriculum texts but often not reflected in the instructional materials used in today's schools.

Curriculum development should be driven by major long-term goals, not content coverage lists. Thus, activities should be included because they are viewed as means for helping students acquire important dispositions and capabilities, not just to acquire cultural literacy construed in a narrow, "trivial pursuit" sense.

Content should be organized into networks structured around important ideas, and these ideas should be taught for understanding and for application to life outside of school. Teaching social studies for understanding and application requires concentrating on key concepts and generalizations that help students understand and appreciate how the social world works, how and why it has evolved as it has, how these understandings can be used to predict or control social outcomes, and what the implications may be for personal values or social policies.

Content provides the cognitive base for activities. Coherent content structured around powerful ideas leads naturally to activities that call for students to think critically and creatively about what they are learning and use it in applications involving inquiry, invention, problem solving, or decision making. However, parade-of-facts content leads to low-level activities calling for retrieval of definitions or facts (matching, fill in the blanks) or isolated practice skills. These low-level activities will yield few opportunities for authentic applications to life outside of school.

Activities are not self-justifying ends in themselves but instead are means for helping students to accomplish major curricular goals. They are designed to fulfill this function by providing structured opportunities for students to interact with content, preferably by processing it actively, developing personal ownership and appreciation of it, and applying it to their lives outside of school.

The knowledge and skills components of the curriculum should be integrated in ways that are consistent with the previous assumptions. Thus, the skills included in a unit should be the ones most naturally suited to important applications of the knowledge taught in that unit. Critical thinking skills and dispositions are developed most naturally through assignments calling for addressing value or policy issues that come up in the process of studying particular content. There is no need to manufacture artificial exercises to develop these skills. Instead of engaging students in artificial exercises in identifying logical or rhetorical flaws, for example, you would engage them in policy debates or assignments calling for critique of currently or historically important policy arguments or decisions. To the extent necessary, you would model and provide instruction in the skills

required for these tasks, but the skills would be developed through authentic applications rather than artificial exercises.

Different types of activities serve different functions, and these functions evolve as units develop. When introducing new content, you might emphasize activities designed to stimulate interest, establish an anticipatory learning set, or link the new learning to prior learning (such as by providing students with opportunities to compare/contrast or make predictions from the old to the new). When developing content, you might stress activities that allow students to extend and apply their learning. When concluding the unit, you might plan activities that help students appreciate connections or that provide opportunities to synthesize their learning.

In combination, the assumptions stated so far imply that *sets of activities* embedded within units should be assessed with reference to the degree to which they are cost-effective as methods for accomplishing major goals, and that *particular activities* should be assessed within this larger context. Given a unit's major goals, an activity under consideration for inclusion might be considered: (1) essential, (2) directly relevant and useful, although not essential, (3) directly relevant but not as useful as another activity that serves the same function more effectively, (4) tangentially relevant but not very useful because it does not promote progress toward major goals, or (5) irrelevant or inappropriate to the goals. For example, we have noted that we would emphasize the development of American political values and policies in teaching U.S. history to fifth graders. With these primary goals, a unit on the American Revolution would emphasize the historical events and political philosophies that shaped the thinking of the writers of the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution. Certain activities might be considered essential for such a unit: activities calling for research, debate, or critical thinking and decision making about the issues that developed between England and the colonies and about the ideals, principles, and compromises that went into the construction of the Constitution. Other activities might be considered less essential but still relevant and perhaps useful: studying more about the thinking of key framers of the Constitution or about the various forms of oppression that different colonial groups had experienced. Still other activities might be rejected because of their focus on peripheral content: studying the lives of Paul Revere or other revolutionary figures who are not known primarily for their contributions to American political values and policies, or studying the details of each of the economic restrictions that England imposed on the colonies. Finally, certain activities would be irrelevant to the unit's goals: studying the details of particular Revolutionary War battles or constructing dioramas depicting these battles.

The key to the effectiveness of an activity is its cognitive engagement potential—the degree to which it gets students actively thinking about and applying content, preferably with conscious awareness of their goals and control of their strategies. “Minds on” learning is essential. If the desired learning experiences are to occur, student involvement must include cognitive engagement with important ideas, not just physical activity or time on task.

The success of an activity in producing thoughtful student engagement with important ideas depends not only on the activity itself but also on the teacher structuring and teacher-student discourse that occurs before, during, and after the time period in which students respond to the activity's demands. Activities are likely to have maximum impact when the teacher (1) introduces them in ways that clarify their purposes and engage students in seeking to accomplish those purposes; (2) scaffolds, monitors, and provides appropriate feedback concerning students' work on the activity; and (3) leads the students through appropriate post-activity reflection on and sharing of the insights that have been developed.

Principles for Designing and Selecting Activities

Consistent with these assumptions, we suggest the following principles for designing or selecting activities. For more details, see Alleman and Brophy (1992) or Brophy and Alleman (1991, 1992).

Primary Principles that Apply to Each Individual Activity

This first set of principles identifies *necessary criteria that should be met by each individual activity* considered for inclusion in a unit. Failure to meet any of these criteria constitutes a flaw that would disqualify the activity from further consideration.

1. Goal relevance. *Activities must be useful as means of accomplishing worthwhile curricular goals (phrased in terms of target capabilities or dispositions to be developed in students).* [Goal: Develop an understanding regarding the various forms of exchange and money and the tradeoffs associate with each. Activity: In pairs, identify each of the pictorial representations of the various forms of exchange and money and discuss the negatives and positives of each.] Activities may serve many goals, but each activity should have a primary goal that is an important one, worth stressing and spending time on. Activities that amount to mere busy work do not meet this criterion; nor do games and pastimes—no matter how enjoyable—that lack a significant curricular purpose. Nor do activities that are limited to reinforcement of vocabulary or skills that are never used in authentic applications.

The content base for activities should have enduring value and life application potential, not just cultural literacy status as a term that students might encounter in general reading or social discourse. Even if a word, person, or event is currently a common term of reference, you should ask why this is so and whether there are good reasons for it to continue to be so indefinitely. If there are, the reference is probably useful as a way to remember some important principle. Thus, it might be worth including Franklin's quote about hanging separately if we do not hang together or Lincoln's quote about not fooling all of the people all of the time in a history curriculum, and perhaps even building activities around them (discussion of their meanings or debate of their validity or application). There would be much less justification, however, for including quotes such as "Don't shoot until you see the whites of their eyes," or "Shoot if you must this old gray head..." let alone for making them the focus of activities.

There must be at least logical (preferably research-based) reasons for believing that an activity will be effective in accomplishing its primary goal. This seemingly obvious principle is violated with surprising frequency. For example, many supposedly motivational activities are not actually likely to develop motivation to learn the content. Consider introducing a unit on rules and laws by having students teach classmates some of their favorite games and spending time playing those games. It is true that one can make connections between game rules and social rules or laws, but there are important differences between game rules and social rules. Using the former as an analogy to the latter may create misconceptions; time-consuming play is not needed to introduce the concept of social rules; and there is no reason to believe that playing games will motivate students to want to learn about social rules. (If anything, it may cause them to resent this intrusion into their fun.) Remember, an activity suggested in a teacher's manual will not necessarily fulfill the functions stated for it (if any). In fact, it may have no significant pedagogical value at all (it may have been selected via computer simply because it fits the theme or topic, with no concern for goals and major understandings).

Activities should be built around powerful ideas, not isolated facts or other peripheral content that lacks life-application potential. The geography components of current social

studies curricula frequently fail to meet this criterion because they engage students in memorizing miscellaneous facts about a country instead of developing understanding and appreciation of how and why the country developed as it did and what some of its current trends and issues are.

Be sure that key ideas that provide the content bases for activities are represented accurately, so that the activities do not induce or reinforce misconceptions. Activities often are based on vague or somewhat incorrect definitions (e.g., products are things that we use). Others feature misleading rather than prototypical examples (e.g., cultural studies activities that encourage students to develop chauvinistic stereotypes rather than well-informed understandings: such as singing slaves' spirituals or participating in "Indian pow wows").

2. Appropriate level of difficulty. *Each activity must be pitched within the optimal range of difficulty (i.e., the students' zones of proximal development). It must be difficult enough to provide some challenge and extend learning, but not so difficult as to leave many students confused or frustrated.* You can adjust difficulty levels either by adjusting the complexity of activities themselves or by adjusting the degree to which you structure and scaffold those activities for your students.

Structuring and scaffolding of an activity must be sufficient to enable students to accomplish its primary goal if the students invest reasonable effort in attempting to do so. If they cannot engage in the activity with enough understanding to be able to perform its required tasks, or if these tasks are (in effect) performed for them by the teacher or by the structuring built into the materials, the activity's value will be nullified.

Ordinarily, activities should not combine difficult new processes with difficult new content. Difficult new processes should be introduced in the context of applying easy or familiar content. When the main purpose is to get students to apply new content, activities should employ easy or familiar formats and processes. Violations of this principle can cause students to become so concerned about the procedural requirements of unfamiliar activities (such as role playing) that they fail to attend sufficiently to their content-related purposes (Blumenfeld, Mergendoller, & Swarthout, 1987).

3. Feasibility. *Each activity must be feasible for implementation within the prevailing constraints (e.g., space and equipment, time, types of students).* With feasibility of activity consider: space, equipment, time, and types of students. Some activities are difficult to implement because they require more noise or commotion than is feasible in most classrooms. Others are difficult to justify because they involve significant risk to students' emotional security or would be offensive to the community.

4. Cost effectiveness. *The educational benefits expected to be derived from an activity must justify its anticipated costs (for both teacher and students) in time and trouble.* Some activities are not worth the time and trouble it would take to implement them. Often this is the case for activities suggested as ways to generate interest in a new topic or to culminate curriculum units. Other examples include time-consuming construction of murals or dioramas and overly ambitious pageant-like simulations and games.

Activities should not be burdened with needless complications that may distract students from their primary goals. Simple worksheet activities that should only require circling, underlining, or writing in answers often call for coloring, cutting and pasting, or other modes of response that take up time and distract students from content-related purposes. Many activities are complicated in counterproductive ways by converting them into games that place more emphasis on speed of response than on thoughtful understanding or that focus students' attention on winning a competition rather than on learning or applying content.

Secondary Principles That Apply to Each Individual Activity

The principles in this section refer to features of activities that are *desirable but not strictly necessary*. Each individual activity in a curriculum should embody all of the primary principles listed above and as many of the following secondary principles as can be incorporated in ways that are consistent with the primary principles.

1. Multiple goals. *An activity that simultaneously accomplishes many goals is preferable to one that accomplishes fewer goals (so long as it is just as effective in accomplishing the primary goal).* In social studies, activities that allow for integration across subjects or inclusion of special topics (e.g., career education) or skills (e.g., problem-solving) may be desirable. However, such integration should not interfere with accomplishment of the primary social education goal.

Most successful integration occurs not as a result of deliberate attempts to inject integration into the curriculum, but as natural by-products of goal-oriented attempts to provide opportunities for authentic applications of big ideas. This process will identify numerous activities that incorporate various inquiry and thinking skills as well as knowledge or skills associated with language arts or other school subjects. If this does not occur sufficiently, you might look for ways to adapt planned activities so as to incorporate more content from other areas or to shift from individual to cooperative formats. Be sure, however, that any such changes are consistent with the overall goals of your social studies program and with the primary goal of each activity. See Chapter 12 for more about curricular integration.

2. Motivational value. *Other things being equal, activities that students enjoy (or at least find meaningful and worthwhile) are preferable to activities that students do not enjoy.* Typically, authentic, holistic, life-application activities not only are of greater pedagogical value but also are more enjoyable to students than information recognition or retrieval worksheets, isolated skills practice exercises, or boring, repetitive seatwork.

Like integration, motivation is an important but nevertheless secondary principle. Too often, curriculum developers or teachers treat it as primary by planning “fun” activities that lack goal relevance. No matter how much students may enjoy an activity, it has no curricular value unless it promotes progress toward some worthwhile goal.

3. Topic currency. *Activities that are constructed around currently or recently taught powerful ideas and that cohere as a set that builds toward major goals are preferable to “orphan” activities that are constructed around isolated content.* Inserted skills exercises or activities that are built around disconnected topics tend to disrupt the continuity and thrust of the students’ progress through curriculum units. Furthermore, the isolated nature of these intrusions minimizes their value as learning experiences.

4. Whole-task completion. *Opportunities to complete whole tasks are preferable to isolated practice skills, matching of words to definitions, or other work that does not cohere and result in closure as completion of a meaningful task.* This is another principle that will mostly take care of itself if activities are planned with emphasis on major goals and authentic life applications.

5. Higher-order thinking. *The best activities challenge students not just to locate and reproduce information but to interpret, analyze, or manipulate information in response to a question or problem that cannot be resolved through routine application of previously learned knowledge.* This principle incorporates Newmann’s ideas about thoughtfulness in academic activities (Newmann, Secada, & Wehlage, 1995). It implies that good activities will engage students in sustained and thoughtful discourse or writing about content in ways that cause them to think critically and creatively about it as they attempt to conduct inquiry, solve pro-

blems, make decisions, or engage in citizen action projects. The most desirable discourse activities involve discussion or debate rather than just recitation, and the most desirable writing assignments involve sustained writing rather than just filling in blanks.

6. Adaptability. *Activities that can be adapted to accommodate students' individual differences in interests or abilities are preferable to activities that cannot.* Other things being equal, activities that offer students some opportunity for choice in deciding what to do or autonomy in deciding how to do it are preferable to activities that lack these features. Similarly, activities that students of differing ability levels can address at multiple levels of difficulty or sophistication are preferable to activities that require all students to use the same process in order to produce the same outcome.

Principles That Apply to Sets of Activities

The principles in the previous two sections apply to each activity considered individually. In contrast, the principles in this section apply to *sets* of activities developed as part of the plan for accomplishing the goals of a unit. Each principle might not apply to each separate activity in the set, but *the set as a whole should reflect these principles* (insofar as it is possible to do so while still meeting the primary goals).

1. Variety. *The set should contain a variety of activity formats and student response modes.* Within the range of activities suited to the unit's goals, variety is desirable as a way to accommodate individual differences in students' activity preferences. There might be both individual and cooperative activities, for example, as well as variety in communication modes (reading, writing, speaking, listening) and information-processing requirements and task forms (communicating understanding, responding critically, conducting inquiry, solving problems, making decisions).

2. Progressive levels of difficulty or complexity. *Activities should progressively increase in levels of challenge as student expertise develops.* As students become more accomplished in meeting the demands of various activity formats, they can take on more complex assignments, assume greater autonomy in deciding how to organize their responses, gather data from a broader range of sources, and so on. Consider whether the set of activities reflects (1) variety, (2) progressive levels of difficulty, (3) life application, (4) a full range of goals, (5) concrete experiences, (6) a connection between declarative and procedural knowledge, and (7) natural application.

3. Life applications. *Students should get to apply what they are learning to current events or other aspects of their lives outside of school (in ways that make sense given their levels of development).* Even if they do not involve taking action, such applications should at least include opportunities to develop understanding and appreciation of how the ideas currently studied in school apply to issues that call for personal and civic decision making. Much current instruction fails to include such applications, and when it does many of the so-called applications are confined to de-contextualized "academic" examples or cases that do not apply to students' lives outside of school. For example, students sometimes are asked to make predictions about a fictional country based on what they are told about its geographical features. If students are to develop appreciation for the value of geographical principles, however, they will need authentic opportunities to see how the principles can help them to understand how geography influences what people do, the types of shelters people have, the kinds of resources people have access to, and so forth.

4. Full range of goals addressed. *As a set, the activities should reflect the full range of goals identified for the unit.* In particular, to the extent that values or citizen action goals are included along with knowledge and skill goals, the set should include activities

designed to develop values or citizen action dispositions. Whenever a goal implies doing, activities should include actual doing, not just reading or talking about it.

5. Concrete experiences. *Where students lack sufficient experiential knowledge to support understanding, sets of activities should include opportunities for them to view demonstrations, inspect artifacts or photos, visit sites, or in other ways to experience concrete examples of the content.* Concrete experiences are especially important in connection with knowledge that children ordinarily do not get much opportunity to develop through their everyday experiences. To learn about conditions of life in past times or in different cultures, for example, children may need to handle artifacts, view photos or films, or read or listen to factually based children's literature in addition to reading textbooks. Resources of this kind are increasingly available on the Internet or in video and CD-ROM formats.

6. Connecting declarative knowledge with procedural knowledge. *Students should learn relevant processes and procedural knowledge, not just declarative or factual knowledge, to the extent that doing so is important as part of developing basic understanding of a topic.* For example, sets of activities in government and civics units should go beyond teaching facts about government (capitals, names of office holders) to include activities designed to develop understanding of governmental processes (what different levels of government do and how they do it) and citizen participation dispositions and skills (voting, lobbying). Similarly, in learning about different forms of maps, graphs, and other data display formats, students should learn not just that the different forms exist, but why they exist and how they can be used as tools to accomplish particular purposes.

7. "Natural" applications. *Activities that are "naturals" for developing understanding of a unit's content should be included in the set for the unit.* Retrieval charts and related comparison/contrast methods should be used whenever the content has focused on different examples of concepts (Indian tribes, geographic regions, governmental forms) or generalizations (population development tended to follow water transportation routes prior to the invention of motorized vehicles). Activities designed to develop understanding of sequences of causes, effects, and subsequent implications are "naturals" in teaching history, as are activities built around comparisons of historical events with contemporary events that appear to be following similar patterns.

Principles for Implementing Activities with Students

The principles discussed in previous sections refer to the features of activities themselves. The following principles identify ways that teachers might structure and scaffold the activities for their students.

Completeness. *A complete activity ordinarily would include the following stages:*

1. Introduction: the teacher communicates the goals of the activity and cues relevant prior knowledge and response strategies.
2. Initial scaffolding: the teacher explains and demonstrates procedures if necessary, then asks questions to make sure that students understand what to do before releasing them to work on their own.
3. Independent work: individuals, pairs, or small groups work mostly on their own but with teacher monitoring and intervention as needed.
4. Debriefing/reflection/assessment: teacher and students revisit the activity's primary goals and assess the degree to which they have been accomplished.

Effective activities require not just physical actions or time on task but cognitive engagement with important ideas, which depends in part on the teacher structuring and teacher-student discourse that occur before, during, and after students' responses to the activity's demands. Even for an inductive or discovery learning activity, an optimal type and amount of teacher structuring and teacher-student discourse will be needed to maximize the activity's impact.

Introduction. *Students will need to understand the intended purposes of the activity and what these imply about how they should respond to the activity. These understandings are not self-evident, so you will need to develop them in the process of introducing the activity to the students. Good introductions to activities fulfill at least four purposes or functions:*

1. Motivating students' interest in or recognition of the value of the activity
2. Communicating its purposes and goals
3. Cueing relevant prior knowledge and response strategies
4. Establishing a learning set by helping students to understand what they will be doing, what they will have accomplished when they are finished, and how their accomplishments will be communicated or evaluated

Be sure to make the goals and purposes of activities clear when introducing them. Students should understand that activities call for goal-oriented cognitive and affective engagement with important ideas, not just completion of a series of steps to fulfill a requirement.

Also, cue any relevant prior knowledge. This might include comparison or contrast with previous activities, asking students to use their prior knowledge to make predictions about the upcoming activity, explaining where the activity fits in a sequence or bigger picture, or helping students to make connections between the activity's content and their personal knowledge or experiences.

Initial scaffolding *Before releasing students to work mostly on their own, provide whatever explicit explanation and modeling that students may need in order to understand what to do, how to do it, and why it is important.* To the extent that the activity calls for skills that need to be taught rather than merely referenced, your introduction should include explicit explanation and modeling of strategic use of the skills for accomplishing the tasks that are embedded in the activity. Consider having a student repeat the directions, which will give you a general indication if students understand them. Moreover, students may benefit from having a classmate, in addition to the teacher, state the directions.

Independent work *Once students have been released to work mostly on their own, monitor their efforts and provide any additional scaffolding or responsive elaboration on the instructions that may be needed to structure or simplify the task, clear up confusion or misconceptions, or help students to diagnose and develop repair strategies when they have made a mistake or used an inappropriate strategy.* These interventions should not involve doing tasks for students or simplifying the tasks to the point that they no longer engage students in the cognitive processes needed to accomplish the activity's goals. Instead, interventions should involve scaffolding within the students' zones of proximal development in ways that allow them to handle as much of the task as they can at the moment but also to progress toward fully independent and successful performance.

Students will need feedback about their performance—not only information about correctness of responses but also diagnosis of the reasons for errors and explanation of how their performance might be improved. To the extent possible, provide immediate feedback as you circulate to monitor performance while students are engaged in an activity, not just delayed feedback in the form of grades or comments provided at some future time.

Debriefing/reflection/assessment *Bring activities to closure in ways that link them back to their intended goals and purposes.* Provide students with opportunities to assess

their performance and to correct and learn from their mistakes. Ordinarily there should be a teacher-led *post-activity debriefing or reflection* that reemphasizes the activity's purposes and goals, reflects on how (and how well) they have been accomplished, and reminds students about where the activity fits within the big picture defined by the larger unit or curriculum strand.

For teachers, post-activity reflection also includes evaluating the effectiveness of the activity for enabling students to accomplish the goals. Depending on the relative success of the activity and the apparent reasons for it, you may need to take remedial actions now or adjust your plans for next year.

Optimal format *Where alternatives are possible, implement an activity in whatever format will maximize the time that students spend in active and thoughtful cognitive engagement (and thus minimize the time that they spend being passive, confused, or engaged in busywork).* Many activities that involve communicating about or debating content, for example, are better done in pairs or small groups than as whole-class activities that offer active roles to just a few students and require the others only to listen.

Optimal use of instructional time If the independent work phase of an activity calls for forms of work that are time consuming but do not require close teacher monitoring, these aspects of the work can be done outside of the time allocated for social studies instruction. Ordinarily, students should do activities such as reading and taking notes for a research assignment, editing initial drafts for grammar and spelling, or working on elaborate illustrations or constructions during general study periods or at home.

Extending the Curriculum through Out-of-School Learning Experiences

Learning opportunities in classrooms are necessarily limited and somewhat artificial compared to what is possible under more natural and unconstrained conditions. One way to compensate for this is to use the community as a living laboratory for social studies learning, and in the process, use the diversity of student backgrounds represented in the class as a resource for promoting social studies understandings. By “out-of-school learning opportunities,” we do not mean mere homework, which traditionally has focused on practice exercises designed to reinforce in-class teaching (Cooper, 1989). Instead, we refer to learning opportunities that expand and enrich the curriculum by causing students to think and collect information about how social studies concepts learned at school apply to family and community situations, then feed their findings back into subsequent class discussions (see Chapter 13 for more about homework).

College Students' Reports of Learning Activities Experienced in Elementary Social Studies

As an application and indirect test of the principles presented earlier in this chapter, we asked preservice teachers to tell us about the social studies activities they remembered from their elementary years and to state what they believed they learned from engaging in those activities. It was important to ask what the students remembered learning because curriculum developers and teachers often cite salience in students' memories as justification for their activity selections. (“Students may not remember the everyday stuff,

but they all remember our reenactment of the First Thanksgiving.”) Such justifications are questionable if the students remember the activities only because they were fun or if they report undesirable learning outcomes (e.g., stereotyped perceptions of Native Americans acquired through participation in First Thanksgiving reenactments).

We identified as “best” activities those that produced reports of noteworthy cognitive learning (a significant conclusion or insight) combined with desirable affective outcomes (interest or empathy). Thematic units, simulations, discussions/debates, and field trips most often emerged as “best” activities. Lectures/presentations were depicted positively by many students, mostly due to memorable media presentations or visits by resource people. Seatwork and construction projects were least likely to be named as “best” activities. Activities such as memorizing the state capitals, learning the states in alphabetical order, writing out definitions, answering questions about the text, coloring maps, doing ditto sheets, or memorizing the locations of states and nations often were criticized as boring or pointless.

Discussions and debates typically yielded positive reports (especially current events discussions, as opposed to discussions of events in the past). So did simulations, field trips, and activities that were embedded within thematic units that allowed for sustained study of a substantial topic (archeology, Native Americans, states or nations). However, research reports on states or nations often produced little substantive learning. Apparently, these reports focused on activities such as looking up and listing the states’ birds and flowers or the nation’s exports and imports (without learning much about the reasons for these economic characteristics). Social studies goals would be better served if report assignments were structured with emphasis on learning the more important aspects of states or nations and the geographical, historical, and economic reasons why they have the characteristics that they do.

Many students reported constructing products. Often these were maps, photo montages, or other illustrations to accompany reports on states or nations, but many were time-consuming activities such as building a pyramid, making a papier-mâché globe, making flags, creating a puzzle of the United States, or building a bridge. The time involved in some of these construction activities raises cost-effectiveness concerns, especially because the learning outcomes associated with most of them were not impressive.

Low-level, repetitive seatwork was mentioned frequently and often disparaged as boring or counterproductive. Two other activities did not appear frequently, but were singled out for pointed criticism when they were reported. The first was memorizing and reciting (e.g., the Gettysburg Address, the states in alphabetical order). Students who mentioned these activities usually did so contemptuously, pointing out that they no longer remembered much of what they had memorized. The other disparaged activity was taking turns reading aloud from the textbook. Rather than mere contempt, students reported this activity with resentment. In addition to sheer boredom, they mentioned the humiliation that it caused poor readers. Some of these students added that such activities made them “hate” social studies and/or the teacher.

Principles for Evaluating Activities: NCSS Position Statement on Powerful Teaching and Learning

The implications of the five qualities of powerful social studies teaching and learning (meaningful, integrative, value-based, challenging, and active) described in Chapter 3 suggest the importance of combining content with activities that meet the criteria outlined in

this chapter (NCSS, 1993; 2008). We believe these five qualities should serve as principles for evaluating activities. No one activity needs to meet all five qualities, but each activity should represent some of them, and the activities you use collectively should represent all five qualities.

Meaningful. The teacher emphasizes authentic activities that call for using content for accomplishing life applications. Critical-thinking dispositions and abilities are developed through policy debates or assignments calling for critique of currently or historically important policies, not through artificial exercises in identifying logical or rhetorical flaws. Students engage in cooperative learning, construction of models or plans, dramatic recreations of historical events that shaped democratic values or civic policies, role-play and simulation activities (such as mock trials or simulated legislative activities), interviewing family members, and collecting data in the local community. Such activities help them to develop social understandings that they can explain in their own words and can apply in appropriate situations.

Integrative. Powerful social studies activities are integrative and cross disciplinary boundaries. For example, an activity that addresses multiple content goals might use one or more literacy genres. A group research project might draw from mathematics, literacy, and even include a science-related activity. See Chapter 12 for more on integration.

Value-based. If the content goals focus on appreciation, activities might include ones that promote critical and analytical thinking, consideration of other perspectives, empathy, sensitivity to cultural likenesses and differences, and so on. If the content goals focus on understanding, application, and appreciation, activities might focus on core democratic values such as justice, equality, liberty, and the common good.

Challenging. Activities need to be intellectually challenging, not simple paper-pencil worksheets that require simple recall. Generally, more challenging activities will meet multiple goals. They typically involve higher-order thinking, including synthesis, analysis, application, and evaluation, and require sustained and thoughtful discourse.

Active. Typically, “active” is associated with “hands-on” learning. This may or may not be appropriate depending on the content goals. For example, if students were studying shelter and the goal was to develop understanding and appreciation for the steps and challenges associated with construction, having students build gingerbread houses would not be appropriate. Visiting a construction site, observing the workers, and/or studying a series of photographs accompanied by an interactive discussion would be far more meaningful. “Minds-on” activities including prompts such as “think about,” “listen for,” and “observe” are examples of activities that are active yet do not include physical movement.

Technology Tips

The Internet offers a wealth of lesson plans and resources. Many historic sites (e.g., Colonial Williamsburg at www.history.org/) and newspapers (e.g., *The New York Times* at learning.blogs.nytimes.com/) offer rich lessons drawing upon primary source materials. However, sometimes plans and resources on the Internet are not high-quality, nor do they meet the principles we suggest for designing, implementing, and evaluating activities. Find a lesson plan you might use in your classroom and apply our principles. Does this lesson need modification to meet more of the principles before using? What would you modify?

Summary

Instructional activities play a major function in elementary social studies. We encourage you to pay careful attention to the activities that are selected to ensure that they are all related to the goals, are the appropriate level of difficulty, and are feasible and cost effective. Your activities should promote major social studies understandings. After all, what makes an activity worthwhile in the long run is not just that it is

memorable but that it has led to important learning. There is a great deal of room for improvement here. It can be accomplished primarily by placing more emphasis on selecting learning activities with major social education goals in mind, emphasizing these goals when structuring and scaffolding the activities for students, and reemphasizing them in post-activity debriefing exercises.

Reflective Questions

1. How would you respond to a principal or teaching colleague who insists that all activities should be “hands-on” for meaningful learning to occur?
2. Imagine you have been asked to give a talk to building principals in your district. The topic is Instructional Activities. You have decided to use this chapter as the basis for your presentation.
 - What unfamiliar but useful information would you include?
3. What previous misconceptions about instructional activities were dispelled as the result of reading this chapter? How will these inform your future practice?
4. How do you view the relationship between instructional activities and student achievement?

Your Turn: Learning Activities

In order to assess your level of understanding regarding the principles for designing and selecting instructional activities contained in this chapter, we have provided an exercise focusing on a third-grade land-use unit. Study the goals of the unit carefully, and then read each of the activities. Using the guiding primary principles, rate each activity as “good,” “bad,” or “conditional.” Be prepared to give reasons for your decisions.

The content for this exercise was adapted from the third-grade Houghton Mifflin textbook, *From Sea to*

Shining Sea, Unit 4, Chapters 9 and 10 (pp. 167A-215). The focus is the United States today. Chapter 9 addresses our current use of the land to meet our needs. Specifically the chapter deals with agriculture, industry, and transportation. Chapter 10 focuses on some of the consequences of our use of natural resources, emphasizing the need for us to work together to solve environmental problems.

Unit Goals

- Develop an understanding and appreciation for how we use the land to meet our needs and wants. (The San Joaquin Valley is described to demonstrate how modern technology is used to produce huge amounts of food. Pittsburgh is used as the example of an industrial city because it occupied an important place in the industrial history of our country, its geographical location influenced its growth as an industrial giant, and its economic history reflects various periods in the economic development of our nation. Another theme woven into the chapter is the role of transportation, especially railroads, in carrying goods and people from coast to coast.)
- Develop an understanding and appreciation for the earth as our shared home, the importance of conserving our natural resources, and the consequences of our misuse of these resources.
- Develop understanding, appreciation, and life applications for solving environmental problems.

Possible Activity Selections

ACTIVITY	RATING	REASONS
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Bring in five bunches of grapes and five empty tissue boxes without tops. Form five groups of students and have each group select one member to compete in a fruit-picking contest. Have students pretend that the bunches are fruit trees. The pickers are to neatly fill the boxes without damaging or bruising the fruit. 2. Tell students that people have figured out how much each acre of farmland in the United States produces, on the average. The number is based on the total amounts of all types of farm products. Have students graph the following data on the overall increase in production, labeling the axes "Year" and "Amount": 1900—146, 1925—143, 1950—213, and 1975—440. 3. Have students work in small groups to investigate different types of farms, such as crop farms; flower farms; beef cattle, hog, and sheep farms; dairy farms; and poultry farms. Allow time for groups to present their findings in class, and encourage the use of visuals. 4. Arrange field trips to local farms of different types to give students first-hand knowledge of their operation. 5. Have each student make a chart of the produce grown in the San Joaquin Valley and indicate with a symbol which products could be harvested by machine and which by hand. 6. Assign groups of students to interview produce managers at local supermarkets. Have students find out where the store's fruits and vegetables are grown and how they were transported to the store. Ask each group to report its findings to the class. 7. Focus attention on the Benton painting on page 178, explaining that the year is 1930. Ask students what this steel mill would have smelled, sounded, looked, and felt like. Explain that steel workers form huge bars, sheets, and strips of steel from molten steel which they must hammer, press, roll, and shape under very high heat. 8. Conduct a class discussion. Focus questions should include: "How might very fast freight trains be helpful to the farmers in the San Joaquin Valley?" "What do you think would happen to the transportation industry if someone invented a faster and cheaper way of moving goods?" 9. Work with a group. Make a model freight train out of shoeboxes. Draw on a shoebox to make it look like a certain type of train car. Load your train with freight. Decide where it is going and then tell the class. 10. Many tall-tale characters are heroes to certain industries. For example, Joe Magaree is a hero to the steelmakers, John Henry is a hero to railroaders, and Paul Bunyan is a hero to lumberjacks. Make up your own classroom tall-tale hero. Brainstorm the kinds of things your hero would do. Work in groups to write stories. Put all the stories together to make a classroom book. Vote on a title for your book. Choose someone to draw a cover. 		

11. Discuss wasteful practices with students, such as overwatering lawns, lengthy showers, and so on. Have students brainstorm others. Then have each student draw a picture of a wasteful practice that he or she might help eliminate.
12. Draw attention to the picture of Mt. McKinley on page 201. Tell students to pretend that this is not a protected national park and that they will determine its future. Divide the class into two groups. Have one group represent an environmental protectionist point of view and the other group represent ski resort developers. Provide time for students to prepare their arguments and to present their debate. Explain to students that ideally we need to balance our use of resources and our protection of them. We cannot preserve all places as they are.
13. Create a large outline shape of a tree from used paper grocery bags. Attach it to the bulletin board and title it "Save This Tree." Then have students brainstorm a list of things they can do to save paper and trees. Have students write their ideas on pieces of paper bags, which they can color and cut into the shape of leaves to attach to the tree shape.
14. Have students work in small groups to create "Save Our Water" checklists. Their lists should include tightly turning off faucets; fixing drips and leaks; never letting water continue to run while brushing one's teeth; and using less water for showers and baths. Have the groups share lists and then compile a composite class list.
15. Have small groups compose letters to the Environmental Protection Agency. Waterside Mall, 401 M Street, S.W., Washington, DC 20406. Each group can request different information, such as a list of EPA agencies and their locations; information about what the EPA does; pamphlets about air pollution; brochures about how to start a recycling center; or information about a specific problem in the students' own community. Have students share the information they get.
16. Conduct a class discussion. Focus it on the question: "How does farming in the San Joaquin Valley depend on natural resources?"
17. Have students draw a factory polluting the air, water, and soil. Suggest that students include billowing smoke stacks, a pipe dumping waste into a nearby river, and huge containers of waste in back of the factory. Then have the students make a second drawing of the same factory showing the pollution reduce through the use of filters, sealed containers, and so on.
18. Have students predict what would happen to a town in which no one stopped air, soil, or water pollution. Have each student write a paragraph describing the town after 10 years of unchecked pollution.
19. Have students work in small groups. Use waste materials such as plastics, packaging, newspaper, and string to make a model of a national park.

20. Have the students participate in a class trial for someone who is accused of throwing trash in the park. Choose a judge, 12 jury members, witnesses, and the person who is accused of the crime. Have the witnesses tell the judge why they think the person is innocent or guilty. If the accused is guilty, the jury should decide what the punishment will be.		
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After completing the exercise, revisit those activities you have identified as good. Check your reasoning. Review the NCSS five qualities of powerful teaching. Which of them apply to the activities you designated as “good?”

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF CURRICULAR INTEGRATION?

TEACHER VOICE

*Kristy Brugar, Doctoral Candidate and
Former Middle School Teacher*

The simple answer to integrating social studies and literacy is often “I’ll read a book about it!” or “I’ll have my students read a book about it.” However, effective integration of social studies and literacy must go further than “reading the book” in order to open up a world of possibilities for our students to access information and to better understand the past and present: they must *think critically*.

This chapter explains that curricular integration “appears to be an obviously good idea.” Throughout this chapter the authors help pre-service and in-service teachers use this “good idea” to create powerful and meaningful learning experiences for their students. I appreciate the cautious approach the authors take to curriculum integration in this chapter. They identify the potential of integration by providing viable suggestions of curricular experiences in order for students to develop an enhanced understanding and greater appreciation for social studies.

As a former classroom teacher, I consistently tried to make social studies relevant to my students. By nature, social studies is an interdisciplinary subject, and effective social studies teachers combining civics, economics, geography, and history to help their students better understand the world around them. With constraints on teachers’ time and resources, it is important for educators to understand not only how to integrate the subjects that make up the social studies, but also how to integrate social studies with the other elementary school subject areas, especially literacy.

The authors outline several ways in which teachers and students can meet curricular expectations through desirable integration. Using content from more than one subject area in lessons, transferring skills from one subject area to another, and enrichment are ways of thinking about curricular integration that open up many classroom possibilities. For example in my classroom, students used their knowledge of people, places, and locations of the American Revolution to better understand the actions and motivations of characters in the novel, *Across Five Aprils* (Hunt, 1993). In addition my students used a variety of informational texts (including a textbook) to develop an understanding of the past. Using primary source material, they participated in a simulation and cooperative project on the founding of Washington D.C. In order to complete this project, my students used a variety of written resources to understand the geographic features of the area and existing laws of the United States in 1790. Then, they employed public speaking skills introduced in language arts, and they organized and presented ideas visually to share a proposal for a new capital city to a “mock” Congress.

At the heart of desirable integration is careful planning in which teachers thoughtfully use content, skills, and processes across subject areas to make meaningful learning experiences for their students. Plus, curricular integration reflects the way adults learn and construct knowledge—through study that draws upon multiple and varied areas of knowledge and skills.

What do you think curricular integration means? How can social studies be taught in conjunction with other subjects in meaningful and powerful ways? At this point in the book, you know that *curricular approach* means the content or scope of the social studies program. The word *integration* means combining or adding parts to make a unified whole. For over a century, many educators have argued for the importance of integrating subject areas and integrating schoolwork with the world beyond school to make learning more cohesive and unified (Dewey, 1902). In fact, *integrative* is one of the five qualities of powerful and authentic social studies that NCSS has identified. NCSS explains integrative as “addressing the totality of human experience over time and space...” (NCSS, 2008, p. 278).

James Beane outlines four major aspects of effective integration: (1) integration of experiences, or framing curriculum around everyday problems or issues; (2) social integration, whereby curriculum focuses on social problems that help students develop skills for democratic citizenship; (3) integration of knowledge whereby children use knowledge holistically (drawing on multiple kinds of knowledge in an integrative fashion) rather than using knowledge in fragmented, isolated ways; and (4) integration as a curriculum design, whereby curriculum is developed purposively to teach students about social issues and problems drawing upon relevant knowledge that can be applied in everyday contexts (Beane, 1997, pp. 4–9).

Curricular integration involves setting goals and determining powerful ideas. It also involves selecting content and thinking skills from subjects that can best help develop those goals and teach powerful ideas. It does not involve merely picking and choosing one’s favorite topics, materials, or thinking skills from a variety of disciplines or subjects and putting them together under one lesson or set of lessons. We encourage you to

become familiar with your state's content expectations and with the Common Core State Standards to ensure that the integrated curriculum you design is aligned with standards in the relevant subjects. (The Common Core State Standards have been developed for mathematics and English language arts, see www.corestandards.org/.)

Curricular integration at its best provides many benefits to the learners and to the teacher. Articles and in-service speakers extol its potential for enhancing the meaningfulness of what is taught, for saving teachers time by reducing the need to make so many preparations, for reducing the need to cover everything, and for making it possible to develop knowledge and skills simultaneously. For social studies and other subjects that suffer reduced time allocations as a result of the back-to-basics movement and high-stakes testing, integration is viewed as a way to restore needed content emphasis. In general, integration is seen as a viable response to problems of content balance, as a way to save time, and as a way to make for more natural and holistic learning.

These seemingly compelling arguments have predisposed most educators to view integration in social studies as a desirable curriculum feature. Indeed, the implicit maxim is "the more integration, the better." A few years ago, we shared this view, and we still find it hard to resist the notion that integration is a good idea—in the abstract. However, we have become more cautious after examining the best-selling elementary social studies series, observing in classrooms, and talking to teachers about their integration practices. We have found some desirable forms of integration, but also many undesirable ones.

Curricular Alignment and Coherent Content

Principle 3: Curricular Alignment: All components of the curriculum are aligned to create a cohesive program for accomplishing instructional purposes and goals. When integrating multiple subjects, it is imperative they are aligned. This can be easier said than done, but focusing on the powerful ideas you wish to teach can help. *Principle 5: Coherent Content: To facilitate meaningful learning and retention, content is explained clearly and developed with emphasis on its structure and connections. Coherent content refers to content whose knowledge and skills are connected to each other, whereby the sequence of ideas or events makes sense and the relationships are apparent. Like good curricular alignment, coherent content is facilitated through the use of powerful ideas as an organizational tool. Please see Chapter 14 for a more in-depth description of each principle.*

Desirable Integration

The key to successful integration is that it results in enhanced understanding and appreciation of subject-matter content and processes in ways that promote progress toward social education goals. Adding content drawn from another subject can enrich the content

of social studies. For example, reading about and displaying the works of an artist can enhance the study of a historical period. Adding science content related to technology can enrich understanding of social issues. Using a powerful literary source can add interest and empathy to the study of the Revolutionary War (especially if students can relate to the characters in the text) and help develop students' understanding and appreciation of the origins of U.S. political values and policies.

Literary sources need to be chosen carefully so as to develop topics in ways that promote progress toward major social education goals. For example, if the goal in the early grades is to enrich students' understanding and appreciation of family life in the past, then a book such as *When I was Young in the Mountains* (Rylant, 1982) would be an appropriate selection to include. If the goal is to develop knowledge of pioneer life, a chapter or two from *Little House on the Prairie* (Wilder, 1935) might be more appropriate. The latter novel describes the efforts and dangers involved in digging a well. It is written from a child's point of view—very engaging to a youngster—and it presents a powerful glimpse of pioneer life that enriches the social studies curriculum.

Some forms of subject-matter integration are the result of necessity. For example, certain topics are primarily identified with one subject but require applications of another to be learned meaningfully. Map and globe studies are part of geography, and consumer education is part of economics, but both of these topics require mathematical knowledge and skills.

Recent research on literacy learning (Duke & Bennett-Armistead, 2003) suggests that acquiring skills in the use of informational texts results in both more informed citizens regarding content and higher scores on standardized literacy measures. Speaking and writing skills introduced and practiced during literacy and applied in social studies can enhance knowledge and skills development, as well as meaningfulness, in both subjects. For example, students might be asked to interview business people about an urban renewal project as part of a social studies unit focusing on the city. Using the literacy skills (e.g., using language to communicate effectively for different purposes, including questions and answers) in an authentic way results in acquisition of subject-matter knowledge, promotes a sense of efficacy, and makes learning more powerful. See Alleman and Brophy (2010) for more discussion of integration of social studies and literacy.

Accountability Considerations

The focus of the instruction and the accountability pressures placed on students may be on the knowledge, the processes, or both. If students were asked to write to their political representatives about their legislative roles or policy positions, the assignment would be primarily a social studies activity, although it would include the application of writing skills. In contrast, students might be asked to write about an imaginary visit to the White House as an exercise in descriptive writing. If the emphasis in structuring and grading this assignment were placed on the functions of the president, it would be mostly a social studies activity. However, if the emphasis were on technical aspects of composition and form, the incorporation of text patterns, or on how the student sets a purpose and considers audience, it would be mostly a writing activity—and should not count against social studies instructional time. Of course, assessment and grading could be done using criteria drawn from both subjects.

As another example, students who were studying research skills in literacy and the historical topic of the American Revolution in social studies might be asked to write biographies on key Revolutionary figures. This assignment could promote progress toward important goals in both subjects, especially if the goals were made clear to the students and the reports were graded separately for compositional features and for historical content.

Examples of Appropriate Integrative Activities

For an activity to be considered part of the social studies curriculum, its primary focus should be on one of the social education goals established for the current social studies unit—a goal that would be pursued whether or not this particular activity were included. Other guiding principles that you can use to determine whether an integrative activity is appropriate for social studies include the following: The activity must represent social studies appropriately and not distort or trivialize its subject matter; the benefits to social education must justify the activity's costs in time and effort; the activity must be geared to the appropriate level of difficulty; and it must be feasible for implementation within the constraints under which you must work.

Examples of appropriate integrative activities that we have found in social studies materials fall into three major categories:

1. Necessarily integrative activities that focus on topics that draw on content from more than one subject area
2. Authentic applications in which skills learned in one subject area are used to process or apply knowledge used in another
3. Enrichment activities that help personalize content, make it more concrete, enhance learner curiosity, or add an important affective perspective

Integrative Activities that Focus on Topics that Draw Content from More than One Subject

Some topics inherently cut across subjects. For example, we have noted map and globe studies are part of geography, but they also require applications of mathematical knowledge and skills. We encountered a map activity for the early grades that calls for students to go on a walking trip around the school campus, make sketches of its key features, and measure distances. After recording their measurements, they return to the classroom and make a map to scale. After completing the map, they revisit the route and make any necessary corrections. Finally, they add pictures to enhance the sketches and design a legend so that the map will make sense to visitors to the school and to new students who need to be oriented to the school site. Mathematics and geography combined make this a meaningful and authentic learning experience, since in the world beyond school, adults use both geography and mathematical skills in tasks involving maps.

An elementary social studies unit that focuses on needs and wants includes teaching about an economic decision-making model. A key activity calls for applying this model to decide which bicycle is the best buy: a new model, last year's model, a used bicycle that can be purchased at a garage sale for a mere portion of the original price, or another used one that is in good condition but needs new tires. Prices are attached to each model. Students are then encouraged to use their economics and mathematics knowledge to decide what constitutes the best buy, discuss alternatives and consequences, and finally, individually and then as a group, decide which bicycle to purchase.

In an upper-grade unit in which a major goal is to develop understanding regarding the tradeoffs that result from technological change, one activity calls for students to read a case study and discuss the pros and cons of introducing robotics into a factory setting. Students consider the costs and benefits to humans as well as to production profits when robotics are used to replace workers. Students study both science and social studies issues to understand and appreciate that changes can sometimes result in problems and other times lead to fresh and efficient practices.

Integrative Activities in Which Skills Learned in One Subject are Used to Process or Apply Knowledge Learned in Another

If planned carefully, the instruction and the accountability expectations may include both knowledge and processes. In a unit addressing social equity in America, for example, assigning a report on an important American who helped make U.S. society more equitable would be appropriate if the students had developed skills for doing research projects and skills for writing informative/explanatory texts in literacy. However, bear in mind that activities ordinarily should not require students to cope with new processes and new knowledge simultaneously despite what in-service speakers extol as a way to eke out more instructional time for social studies.

The following examples also focus on social studies content goals but integrate skills from other subjects. A history activity calls for students to write an essay explaining how the colonial plantation differed from today's large farms. With proper structuring and scaffolding by the teacher, this activity could be useful in extending understanding and promoting critical thinking about how the nature and economics of farming have changed over time in response to inventions. A creative writing activity calls for students to imagine that they were among the Native Americans forced to endure the Trail of Tears journey, and to write diary entries describing their experiences, attitudes, and future expectations. This topic provides a good basis for narrative writing. The assignment should deepen understanding of the events involved and help students develop sympathetic attitudes toward Native Americans.

Another activity, part of a unit on the Middle East, asks students to analyze newspaper and magazine articles to explain how authors use reason and evidence to support claims, to analyze similarities and difference in points of view across articles, to explain the points of view expressed and the factors that contribute to developing them, and to identify biases. Here, reading skills addressed in literacy are applied to a real-life critical-thinking situation in ways that encourage students to begin to see the power in becoming critical, thoughtful, and astute readers.

Activities that Help to Personalize Content, Make it More Concrete, Enhance Learner Curiosity, or Add an Important Affective Perspective Using Integration

In this section, we present examples of integration using children's literature, the visual arts, music, and technology and offer suggestions for activities to provide powerful social studies teaching and problems to avoid. We also present potential challenges that we encourage you to consider. Effective curricular integration requires careful planning and focus on the powerful ideas.

Children's Literature Carefully selected children's literature has potential for deepening the cognitive and affective dimensions of content (Alleman & Brophy, 1994). In an early elementary social studies unit on families, with a goal to develop understanding and appreciation for peoples' needs and wants, literature can be used to enhance children's ideas. The teacher is directed to read a story to the students about a person wanting something (e.g., Cinderella, King Midas), then pose questions such as "Were these people wise to want the things they did?" "What were the things these people really needed?" The teacher can continue the lesson by explaining that certain things that people need and want cannot be purchased with money. Students are then asked to imagine what some of these resources might be (e.g., love, caring, kindness, respect, and friends). This activity provides a welcome departure from the often-sterile conception of needs and wants, and it appropriately adds an affective dimension that addresses the ideas that valuable things cannot always be purchased, and that there are ways, besides material objects, to make people happy.

Another activity in a unit focusing on early America calls for students to read a primary or secondary source document of Paul Revere's ride and compare it with the more romanticized, less accurate version in Longfellow's poem. In addition to being a natural and useful incorporation of poetry, this document-comparison lesson is a worthwhile activity for helping students to understand some of the ways in which history and fiction differ in goals, formats, credibility, processes, and products.

If you were teaching a unit on neighborhood or community, you might introduce the poem entitled "The General Store" (Field, 1991). Have the students listen to the poem and imagine what the store looks like and determine if it is old or new. Questions to personalize the learning might include "Would you rather shop with your family in a general store or a modern one? Why? What do the two types of stores have in common? Where could we go to find a general store? Why? Why are general stores disappearing? How is the modern store that your family shops in different?"

Literature has potential for deepening cognitive and affective dimensions of the content, but it may introduce problems that you would prefer to avoid. Following are several questions you can use to guide your decision making: Does the literature source:

- *Match the social education goals for the lesson and unit?*
- *Offer sufficient value as a source for social education activities to justify the social studies time allotted for it?*
- *Seem to be of appropriate length given the social knowledge that needs to be included for adequate sense-making?*
- *Enhance meaning and not trivialize the content?*
- *Reflect authenticity and promote understanding of the content?*
- *Enrich social studies understandings as well as promote language arts or other subject-matter content or skills?*
- *Avoid misconceptions, unnecessarily shallow interpretations, or stereotypes in its depictions of people and events?*

Visual Arts From ancient times to the present, people have expressed their thoughts and feelings through various art forms. As such, paintings, photographs, sculptures, and architecture are excellent artifacts for integration combining anthropological and historical studies. Geographical features have always inspired painters, and native peoples, frontier people, trappers, and others have provided fresh material as well. Early painters tended to see the land and people through their own eyes or through the places they were educated. This continues to be a pattern for some contemporary painters as well.

Activities that integrate art with social studies when connected to social education goals help to personalize the time and place being studied. For example, in a unit on France, students are asked to study Monet reprints, describe how he viewed France, identify the places he painted on a map of France, and examine other paintings of the time, and analyze why his paintings, and the paintings of other Impressionists, were so heavily criticized. This activity is followed by one in which students study both his early and later paintings and try to figure out the time period depicted in each painting, citing evidence (e.g., style and subject of the painting) to support or reject their hypotheses.

Integrating art into the social studies curriculum can be useful when teaching geographic understandings or a specific historical period. We suggest you provide students with paintings—usually prints—that capture significant elements of place or time. Encourage students to discuss their observations using a set of guiding questions: What do you see? What does the painting suggest about the place or the historical period or event? Is it an accurate representation? Explain. Another strategy that is useful for examining paintings (particularly those with a lot of activity going on in them) is to divide the painting into

FIGURE 12.1 Painting of Harriet Tubman as she Escorts Escaped Slaves into Canada



quadrants, and then divide the class into small groups and assign each of them a quadrant to study. The class then regroups as a whole to discuss what it observed.

Regardless of how students use art, help them distinguish between observations and interpretations. Consider using a T-chart in which the left column has observations and the right column has interpretations. In an image of the Underground Railroad, for example, students could make interpretations about who the individuals in the painting are based upon what they observe. They might infer that the individuals are slaves who are escaping based upon the observations that their skin is black, that they are traveling across a bridge, and that they are carrying their personal belongings. See Figure 12.1.

Music Music is a powerful vehicle for extending communication about people and cultures across time and space. For example, through songs related to big ideas derived from a unit topic, students can experience feelings of loneliness, sadness, jubilation, struggle, and so forth. If they are studying a particular culture, they can acquire a deepened appreciation for its customs and traditions through music and dance. For example, if Cuba or Argentina were being studied “up close,” listening to folk music or watching video performances of the tango would evoke emotion and reveal cultural borrowing phenomena in a very powerful way.

Integrating music into the social studies curriculum has potential for fostering respect for diversity in authentic ways. It can be used as a background to create atmosphere and interest in a topic, as a strategic part of a lesson to reveal a tone or feeling, or as a medium for communicating a point of view. Typically, students would not be asked to memorize lyrics or perform a dance, because in these instances the social studies understandings would be overshadowed by the “doing” of music and dance.

Technology NCSS (2008) recommends technology as one of the integrative areas with social studies. Technology has expanded our means of communication, research, and dissemination, and students should be equipped with the necessary technological capabilities to become informed and active citizens. Even young students can access relevant information on websites, produce short documents in word-processing or multimedia programs, and engage in electronic communication.

Computer technology has a place in the social studies curriculum, but there are potential challenges associated with it, including philosophical matters, time constraints, and a lack of technology support (Buchanan, 2001). Technology is simply another tool and should not be used for its own sake. Its use must match the goals and enhance understanding of the big ideas under study. Research has focused on the teaching of technologies and how software can affect student learning. Little has been written about the teacher's role in using technology to mediate students' learning, and in particular, learning of subject matter (Wallace, 2004).

Our own classroom observations as well as those described in social studies journals convince us that computers can be a valuable data-gathering source via the Internet. However, do not assume that if it is in cyberspace, it is credible. Cross-referencing is essential. A book by Berson, Cruz, Duplass, and Johnson (2006) entitled *Social Studies on the Internet* is a reputable source that provides an annotated collection of websites for use by social studies teachers.

Besides serving as a storehouse of information, the computer can serve as an electronic communication tool linking individual students and classrooms engaged in learning similar social studies information, a vehicle for playing simulation games, or a way to take a virtual field trip via the Internet. We remind you that the guidelines we offer for selecting instructional activities are equally appropriate for the use of technology: Does it match the goal? Is it at the appropriate level of difficulty? Is it feasible? Is it cost effective?

Technology Tips

Technology can be used effectively to help students produce and disseminate social studies-related work. For example, they could write a letter in the form of an e-mail to the editor of the local newspaper or to city council members expressing their views on a public issue. They could create a short video or multimedia presentation about their local community and disseminate it to others. Teachers can create class websites (with access only to students and families) with information and photographs of classroom activities and homework assignments.

Undesirable Integration

Integration is not always productive. Potential pitfalls in applying the concept are often masked by arguments related to the latest trend in curriculum, the goal of getting teachers to be collaborative, the desire to heighten interest, or the attempt to increase the amount of time that can be given to a particular subject. All of these arguments should give cause for pause. We urge you to be aware of the actual social studies content you are teaching in an integrated lesson (for a variety of reasons, often the social studies content takes a back burner to the other subjects being taught). From our point of view, all integration of content, skills, or activities into social studies should tie directly to the subject and add meaningfulness. If it does not, we urge you to delete it from the social

studies curriculum (although you might want to include it as part of the curriculum for the other subject involved, if it promotes progress toward that subject's major goals). The following are examples of integration activities that we view as inappropriate for use in social studies.

Activities That Lack or Mask Social Studies Education Goals

Most of the ill-conceived forms of integration that we have seen suggested for social studies classrooms involve activities in which the content or skills from other subjects dominates (Brophy & Alleman, 1991). Often these activities lack significant value in any subject and are just pointless busywork (alphabetizing state capitals, counting the number of states included in each of several geographical regions). Others may have value as literacy activities but do not belong in the social studies curriculum (e.g., exercises that make use of social studies content but focus on pluralizing singular nouns, finding the main idea in a paragraph, matching synonyms, using the dictionary). Others are potentially useful as vehicles for pursuing significant social education goals, but are structured with so much emphasis on the literacy aspects that the social education purpose is unclear. We believe that these activities are not cost effective uses of social studies time.

One fourth-grade social studies manual suggested assigning students to write research papers on coal. The instructions emphasized teaching the mechanics of doing the investigation and writing the paper. There was little mention of social education goals or major social studies understandings such as “humans have unlimited wants but limited resources,” or “policy issues such as conservation of natural resources or development of energy alternatives need to be considered in order to protect our existing resources.” With the task conceived narrowly and the focus on research and report writing, it is unlikely that the 25 or so individual reports would yield enough variety to allow students to benefit from one another's work. Consequently, the social education value of this assignment would be minimal and its cost effectiveness would be diluted further because of the considerable time required to obtain and read content sources, copy or paraphrase data, and make presentations to the class.

Cost-Effectiveness Problems

A lesson you will learn early on as a teacher is that often activities (especially hands-on activities) take far longer than you think. These kinds of activities require a great deal of time preparing the materials, setting up the materials for use, enacting the activity, cleaning up the materials, and displaying the final products. Sometimes activities become so hands-on that there is little time left for learning the social studies content. We encourage you to think carefully whether the activity you are planning to do is a good use of time, especially social studies time, which is often limited in the classroom.

Similar masking of social studies education goals and ignoring the time factor occurred in a unit on families, in which students were asked to recreate their families by portraying each member using a paper plate decorated with construction paper, crayons, and yarn. The plates were to be used to “introduce” family members to the class, and then later combined to make murals. Although this activity might lead to an attractive display for the classroom wall, it is time consuming and also structured to emphasize the artistic dimensions rather than the social studies dimensions. We doubt that art teachers would support this activity as appropriate for art classes either.

In a unit on shelter, students were asked to construct examples of homes in tropical areas of the world. Again, such an activity would take a great deal of time, especially if authentic building materials were used. We fear that the emphasis would focus on

accomplishing constructions instead of understanding and appreciating the impact of climate and local geography on living conditions.

Cost-effectiveness problems are also embedded in collage and scrapbook activities that call for a lot of cutting and pasting of pictures, but not much thinking or writing about ideas linked to major social education goals. We encourage you to think about all “hands-on” activities as also being “minds-on.” Instructions for such activities are often given in ways that focus students on the processes involved in carrying out the activities rather than on the powerful ideas that the activities are supposed to develop, and the final products often are evaluated on the basis of criteria such as artistic appeal. For example, one activity called for students to cut out pictures of clothing and paste them under categories such as wool, linen, cotton, and polyester. Students could spend a substantial amount of time on this “hands-on” activity without learning anything important about the history, origins, or economics of different fabrics.

We believe that the time spent on integrated activities must be assessed against the time quotas allocated to the subject in ways that reflect the cost effectiveness of the activities as a means of accomplishing the subject’s major goals. Ask yourself, “Is this integrated activity the best choice given the limited time allocated for social studies?” Also, keep in mind that cognitive/affective engagement need not be “hands on;” in fact, “hands-on” doing can sometimes be a hindrance to “minds-on” learning.

Content Distortion

Attempts at integration sometimes distort the ways that social studies is represented or developed. For example, a unit on clothing included a lesson on uniforms that called for students to make puppets of people dressed in uniforms. The teacher was to set up situations where two puppets would meet and tell each other about the uniforms they were wearing. This activity is problematic because it is time consuming, emphasizes art activities instead of social studies content, and calls for knowledge not developed in the lesson (which provided only brief information about the uniforms worn by firefighters and astronauts). Most fundamentally, however, it is problematic because it results in a great deal of social studies time being spent on uniforms, a topic that at best deserves only passing mention as a basic human need in a unit on clothing.

Content distortion was also observed in a unit on pioneer life that included a sequencing-skills exercise linked to an illustration of five steps involved in building log cabins. The last three steps in the sequence were arbitrarily imposed rather than logically necessary, and in any case they did not correspond to what was shown in the illustration. It appeared that the text authors wanted to include an exercise in sequential ordering somewhere in the curriculum, and they chose this lesson as the place to include it rather than seeing the exercise as important for developing key knowledge about pioneer life.

Often when literature is inserted into social studies textbooks, selections run several pages and exceed the space allotted for covering the content, causing many units to look more like language arts than social studies. Worse, the selections often focus on trivial and peripheral aspects of social studies. We encourage you to always keep in mind the social studies content you wish to teach when using children’s literature.

Some even contradict intended goals or create stereotypes. For example, *The Little Red Hen* (Galdone, 1991) is a poor choice for a unit on friendship because it conflates personal friendship with prosocial and Golden Rule behavior. In the story, the Little Red Hen calls her friends to solicit their help in planting and harvesting a field of wheat. Her friends refuse to help her, so when it is time to eat the fruits of her labor, she refuses to share. The story features characters that are unhelpful and spiteful and

carries an undertone suggesting that friendship is strictly conditional. These are not values we wish to instill in our social studies teaching.

Difficult or Impossible Tasks

Ill-conceived integration attempts sometimes require students to do things that are difficult, if not impossible, to accomplish. In a fifth-grade unit focusing on the U.S. economy, students were asked to demonstrate their understanding of the joint stock company by diagramming its structure to show relationships and flow among the company, stocks, stockholders, and profits. Besides being a distraction from the main ideas of the unit, this activity seems ill-considered because the operations of a joint stock company, although relatively easy to explain verbally, are difficult to depict unambiguously in a diagram.

Other examples of strange, difficult, or even impossible integration tasks that we have observed include asking students to use pantomime to communicate one of the six reasons for the U.S. Constitution as stated in the Preamble; asking students to draw “hungry” and “curious” faces as part of a unit on feelings; and role playing life in the White House as part of a unit on famous places. None of these activities reflect the key social education understandings of the units, and each will probably leave students confused or frustrated because it is difficult, if not impossible, to accomplish unambiguously.

Feasibility Problems

Activities that call for integration should also be feasible within the constraints under which the teacher must work. Certain activities are not feasible because they are too expensive, require space or equipment that is unavailable, involve exceptionally noisy construction work, or pose risks to the physical safety or emotional security of students. For example, an activity attempting to integrate geography, physical education, and music called for the teacher to post the cardinal directions appropriately, then have the students line up and march around the room to music as the teacher called out “March north,” “March east,” and so on. Implementation of this activity in a classroom full of desks and other furniture would invite chaos and potential injury.

Summary

Curriculum integration should not be considered an end in itself but a means of accomplishing significant instructional goals. Activities that feature integration across subjects should not be used anywhere in the curriculum if they lack one or more of the essential characteristics of goal relevance, appropriate level of difficulty, feasibility, and cost effectiveness. Furthermore, many integrating activities that do meet these criteria should not be included in the social studies curriculum because they do not support progress toward major social education goals. (Such activities might be appropriate for inclusion in the curriculum for literacy or some other subject.) Some topics addressed in social studies are naturally integrative, and others can benefit from integrated activities that involve using skills taught elsewhere to process or apply social studies content, to help make that content more concrete or personalized, or to add an important

ffective dimension. We believe that most issues surrounding curricular integration will take care of themselves if social studies teaching is organized around major social education goals and big ideas, because this will naturally lead to activities and assignments calling for students to use skills such as critical thinking, data collection, and articulating and supporting arguments.

We acknowledge the value of productive forms of integration in social studies, but we suggest two caveats. First, content, skills, and activities included in the name of integration should be educationally significant and desirable even if they do not involve the across-subjects feature. Second, such content, skills, and activities should foster rather than disrupt or nullify the accomplishment of major social education goals.

You cannot depend on the manuals supplied with social studies textbook series to suggest content and activities that meet the criteria we have outlined (Alleman & Brophy, 1993). Consequently, you will need to learn to select learning opportunities based not just on whether your students are likely to enjoy them, but also on whether they offer sufficient educational value to merit inclusion in the curriculum. For judging activities that purport to integrate across subjects, we suggest that you consider the following questions:

- *Does the learning opportunity have a significant social education goal as its primary focus?*
- *Would this be a desirable learning opportunity for the social studies unit even if it did not feature across-subjects integration?*
- *Would an “outsider” clearly recognize the learning opportunity as social studies?*
- *Does the learning opportunity allow students to meaningfully develop or authentically apply important social education content?*
- *Does the learning opportunity involve authentic application of skills from other disciplines?*
- *Do students have the necessary prerequisite knowledge and skills?*
- *If the learning opportunity is structured properly, will students understand and be able to explain its social education purposes?*
- *If students engage in the learning opportunity with those purposes in mind, will they be likely to accomplish the purposes as a result?*

Reflective Questions

1. Suppose your mentor or principal has indicated that, because of time constraints, you need to find opportunities to integrate social studies with other school subjects. How will you respond? Be ready to provide reasons and to give examples to illustrate your points.
2. Recent research on literacy learning suggests that acquiring skills in the use of informational texts results in better-informed citizens and higher scores on standardized literacy measures. Select one of the social studies units you have observed or taught and think of at least three “spaces” where informational texts would be useful. What could you expect as additional student outcomes?
3. Revisit a familiar social studies unit, preferably one you are observing or currently teaching. Which of its learning opportunities clearly match the goals and enhance meaningfulness? Should certain activities be excluded because they detract, distort the content, are not cost effective, or for another reason?
4. Imagine that the art or music teacher in your school is interested in planning opportunities for integration with a unit you are planning to teach on the Revolutionary War. How will you respond to the request? (Or, if your school does not have an art or music teacher, imagine that you want to integrate art or music into your social studies teaching.) Select an upcoming social studies unit. Identify the overarching goals and describe opportunities for meaningful integration with the arts.
5. Suppose you are planning a unit with an activity that calls for integration, but after reading this chapter you realize it simply is not cost effective even though it is topic-relevant and matches the goals. Describe how you could reconfigure it as a homework assignment and have the students share the results in a future lesson. Prepare a short note to families explaining the activity and its purpose. Encourage family participation.

Your Turn: Integrating Social Studies Within the Total Curriculum

Use the following exercise focusing on a shelter unit to assess your level of understanding regarding the perspective on integration contained in this chapter. Study the goals carefully, and then read each of the activities. Using the guiding principles for productive

integration and the questions for making decisions about social studies integration, label each activity “good,” “bad,” or “conditional.” Be prepared to give reasons for your decisions.

Unit Goals

- To build on students’ understanding that shelter is a basic need and that different forms of shelter exist.
- To help students understand and appreciate the reasons for different forms of shelter. Shelter needs are determined in large part by local climate and geographical features. Most housing is constructed using materials adapted from natural resources that are plentiful in the local area. Certain forms of housing reflect cultural, economic, or geographic conditions: Tipis and tents are easily movable shelters used by nomadic societies; stilt houses are an adaptation for periodic flooding; high-rises are an adaptation for land scarcity in urban areas.
- To help students understand and appreciate how inventions, discoveries, new knowledge, and development of new materials have enabled many people today to live in housing that offers durability, better waterproofing, insulation, and temperature control, with fewer requirements for maintenance and labor.
- To help students understand how the development of modern industries and transportation make it possible to construct almost any kind of shelter almost anywhere on earth. It is now possible for those who can afford it to live comfortably in very hot or very cold climates.
- To help students appreciate the energy efficiency now possible in modern homes due to the developments of technology.
- To help students acquire sensitivity toward the range of factors that contribute to the type of home (shelter) that a family can afford. (This includes consciousness-raising regarding the homeless.)
- To engender in students an appreciation for their current and future opportunities to make decisions about and exercise some control over aspects of their lives related to their shelter needs (e.g., choice making, life applications).
- To help students acquire an appreciation for the range of structures that have been created for shelters over time.

Possible Activity Selections

ACTIVITY	RATING	REASONS
<p>1. Students read about various forms of shelter, view pictures of these forms, and then discuss reasons why people might select each form.</p> <p>2. Students read about a range of workers, their expertise needed in constructing a house, and the order in which their work would be completed. Then they make puppets to represent these workers talking to one another. The focal point of the discussion should be the role each plays in the completion of the shelter and the sequence in which each job would be done.</p> <p>3. Students prepare a collage that illustrates all the ways in which people satisfy their shelter needs.</p> <p>4. Using a mural illustrating the range of shelters that exist in your area, students study the mural carefully and count the number of shelters depicted.</p> <p>5. After describing (using pictures) inventions, new knowledge, and the development of new materials used in shelters, each student shares with the class the ones he or she thinks are most significant and why.</p> <p>6. Students interview members of their households to find out if and how their homes are energy efficient. (A brief interview schedule will be developed for use in retrieving the data.) A guided class discussion will follow.</p> <p>7. Students study a collection of pictures that illustrate how forms of housing reflect cultural, economic, and geographic</p>		

conditions. Then students participate in a discussion that addresses these issues. At the conclusion of the discussion, each student is asked to identify the most important thing he or she learned.

8. Students are provided pictures to show changes in shelters over time. Students work in groups to arrange the pictures in chronological order. Each group will be asked to provide reasons for its response.

9. Students bring in pictures of shelters from around the world, make a class mural, create lyrics for a song about shelters, and then make a presentation to parents.

10. Students take a walk around the neighborhood, studying the types of shelters that exist and the types of construction materials that are used. Students analyze the findings in a follow-up discussion.

11. Using an outline map of one or two neighborhood blocks, students determine the location of each shelter. They plot each shelter. Upon return, students make a 3-D model representing the area visited.

12. Students listen to a story about the White House. Then in groups, students plan puppet shows representing the following scenarios: the day nobody visited, the day a visitor got lost, the day the presidential family moved in, and the day the electricity went off.

HOW CAN THE CURRICULUM BE EXPANDED AND MADE MORE POWERFUL THROUGH HOMEWORK?

Rob Ley, Experienced Teacher

I was passionate and idealistic when I started teaching. I devoured *Powerful Social Studies* as an undergraduate and attributed a lot of my success teaching social studies as an intern to the ideas in the book. *Powerful Social Studies* had a permanent spot on the corner of my desk as I went into my first year of teaching with a fresh and unsullied perspective believing that my students' experience in school should be challenging, active, and relevant to their lives. Even though I was just beginning my journey in understanding how to make that vision a reality, I set high expectations for myself to achieve it. I began working with a population of at-risk students, and my stance on connecting school to real life was soon challenged in many ways.

Looking back, I realize now that I allowed those teaching challenges to prevent me from implementing the lessons I learned from *Powerful Social Studies*, specifically the expansion of the curriculum to learning opportunities outside of school. I was trying to make sure that I “covered” the required material by using homework as a reinforcement of prescribed learning materials like fill-in-the-blank timelines. My students dedicated most of their effort to remembering and listing isolated pieces of information rather than thinking critically about how the information

TEACHER VOICE

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could help them better understand their lives or solve important problems. These models of homework rarely reflected the backgrounds of my students' family relationships, their imagination, or their values.

I also fell into the rut of allowing a generic curriculum dictate the course of our studies. I prescribed traditional assignments and assessed students' compliance in completing those tasks. Most students followed directions and did what they were told in order to receive credit for completing my assignment. I lacked the artistry to find connections between the curriculum and my students' interests, and also the teacher-student relationships were ignored. The web of curricular interactions remained limited and artificial.

The educational values that I developed during my undergraduate work eventually collided with my frustrations about not meeting my own expectations in engaging students in a form of learning that was intrinsically rewarding to them. I knew that I needed to develop social studies learning around a different curriculum framework. I wanted to maximize the number of opportunities that my students had to apply information to their lives and connect with contemporary issues. I believed that homework could be a valuable tool in creating a personal frame for my students to organize their world and share their learning with others in unique and unforgettable ways. I was at a critical place in my career when I needed to remember why I became a teacher in the first place.

Graduate school allowed me to structure my goals as a teacher, scholar, and researcher. A particular book club activity in Dr. Alleman's class pushed me to consider ways that I could make small incremental changes to homework. Using the book, *The Game of School*, we began to think about the difference between how students traditionally experience homework and how they experience other learning opportunities in their life unrelated to school. I quickly realized the connections between this book and *Powerful Social Studies* and how they both call for teachers to reconsider age-old practices that waste time and fail to engage students intellectually.

During one of our book club sessions in class, Dr. Alleman said, "in order to actually learn something you have to feel it. Motivation is always at the heart of the matter." I remember writing that in bold print at the top of my page. The question, "how can I make this homework assignment more meaningful for my students?" has become the guiding question in my planning. I now respect homework as the single most helpful tool in making connections between school and my students' lives. I have seen the positive impact of utilizing students' experiences outside school with dramatic increases in student attendance and family interest in our classroom topics of study, along with numerous situations in which my students talk about registering voters on elevators,

interviewing truck drivers about current road conditions at the gas station, and motivating their family to start a nonprofit that encourages community volunteerism.

With the help and guidance of Dr. Alleman and *Powerful Social Studies*, I have realized that there is a world of potential learning situations, resources, and community members that can be effectively integrated into social studies learning. Regrettably, when we ignore our students' sincere need to find purpose in what we ask them to do, they will likely replace their natural curiosity with a mere desire to complete assignments in ways that result in better grades or other rewards. Homework and school in general become counterfeit experiences that are detrimental to both learning goals and appreciation of the purpose of school. Homework provides an opportunity for students to reinforce their role in the curriculum, while applying skills and knowledge in a real-world setting.

The focus of this chapter is on meaningful homework. Homework is intended to be aligned with in-school social studies units, in which students interact with family and community members to enhance the importance of powerful ideas introduced and discussed in the classroom. We will provide a rationale, identify and use specific examples to illustrate several potential purposes and functions, and explain how powerful social studies teaching that emphasizes authentic home assignments can provide life applications, engender students' sense of self-efficacy, and create natural opportunities to construct understandings beyond what can be realized in a regular classroom (given the diversity of students, the time constraints imposed for meeting standards, and the range of school subjects to be taught). Finally, we provide guidelines for framing meaningful homework opportunities and ensuring that data from these experiences are linked to the classroom and shared with classmates. We use the terms homework and out-of-school-learning interchangeably.

Given the age-grading system, the high student-to-teacher ratio, the ambiguity and risk involved in academic work (Doyle, 1983), and the other features built into mass education systems, students' learning opportunities in classrooms necessarily are limited and somewhat artificial compared to what is possible under more natural and unconstrained conditions. One way for teachers to compensate for these constraints is to use the community as a living laboratory for social studies learning, and in the process use the diversity of student backgrounds represented in the class as a resource for promoting social studies understandings.


We define meaningful homework as tasks that enrich the in-school curriculum by challenging students to think deeply about important questions, apply their knowledge and skills toward solving genuine problems, and create authentic products that will be used in meaningful ways (Alleman, Brophy, Knighton, Ley, Botwinski, & Middlestead, 2010). Homework can expand and enrich the curriculum by encouraging students to collect information about how social studies concepts learned in school apply to their family situations. Their findings can be used in subsequent class discussions. Well-designed homework can make social studies meaningful and personally relevant.

Currently homework is on most schools' radar screens due to the heightened concerns about accountability. Teachers are increasingly being asked to align curricula to standards, and instruction is in a time crunch due to the number of hours spent on testing. Many teachers feel that the only way they can get through the material is to assign some of it as

homework (Alleman, et. al., 2010). This approach obviously disadvantages a lot of learners and often becomes a de-motivator because these students may not have support at home or may be unclear about the directions. We do not believe that homework, especially for students at the lower elementary grades, should be used for part of their grade. We believe that families should be involved with homework. Thus, we view homework as an important extension of the in-school lessons but do not believe it should be used to evaluate whether children have met lesson and unit goals.

While the debate continues about the impact of homework on student achievement, we believe homework is and will continue to be an integral part of the schooling process. Our approach calls for the realm of possibilities for homework with an emphasis on qualitative changes in the way students view themselves in relation to the task (Kohn, 2007). Authentic homework focuses students on what they are doing, what they are learning in school, and how they can create meaning and apply or extend it in their lives out of school (Alleman, et. al., 2010). In our opinion, homework should be geared toward high-quality learning that fosters in individual students a continuing desire to gain knowledge. Moreover by its very nature authentic homework allows for natural differentiation.

We do not believe that the quality of homework assignments should be evaluated only as good or bad, or as either meaningful or not meaningful. Instead, we suggest that homework practice be viewed on a continuum from *less meaningful*, focusing on compliance with little or no meaning beyond the classroom, to *more meaningful*, focusing on extensive learning with meaning beyond the classroom (Table 13.1). Even incremental changes toward meaningfulness and authenticity have merit and should be encouraged and supported. We do recognize that there is a need and place for basic skills practice (rote/reinforcement) at home. This type of homework is different from assignments and



Opportunity to Learn

Principle 2: Opportunity to Learn: Students learn more when most of the available time is allocated to curriculum-related activities and the classroom management system emphasizes maintaining students' engagement in those activities. Research shows the more time spent on instructional tasks, the more children learn. Thus, homework should similarly be focused on content rather than on busywork. Children need opportunities to apply what they've learned in meaningful situations. Please see Chapter 14 for a more in-depth description of this principle.

TABLE 13.1 FOCUS ON COMPLIANCE VS. FOCUS ON LEARNING

Focus on Compliance: Little or No Meaning Beyond Classroom	Focus on Learning: Meaning Beyond the Classroom
Complete the questions (related to democracy) at the end of the chapter.	Participate in a scavenger hunt (with members of your family, if possible) and look for all the ways democracy plays out in your community. Document your observations.
Complete the worksheet that focuses on the Five Themes of Geography.	Study your local community and find an example of each of the Five Themes of Geography. Document your responses. Make sure the examples are explicit.

TABLE 13.2 CONTINUUM OF MEANINGFUL HOMEWORK

Less Meaningful		More Meaningful	
<i>Memorization of information:</i> (e.g., location of states and capitals).	Plot on a U.S. (labeled) map every time you hear someone mention a state and/or capital.	Plot on a U.S. (labeled) map every time you hear someone mention a state and/or capital and take notes regarding why the state and/or capital was mentioned.	<i>Authentic application of information:</i> Hypothesize about the characteristics of states/capitals. For example, given the 2011 Wisconsin protests in Madison about labor issues, one could hypothesize that there is a sizeable politically liberal population there.
<i>Lower-Level Thinking:</i> Much of our citrus comes from Florida and California due to climate and weather conditions. Find examples of citrus in your grocery store that come from Florida and California.	Locate the states of Florida and California on a U.S. map. Figure out how citrus would most likely be transported to where you live.	Interview individuals who are knowledgeable about the uniqueness of your state to determine what fruits, if any, your state produces that might be shipped to Florida and California. Explain. If none are provided, explain why not.	<i>Higher-Order Thinking:</i> The price of citrus is driven by fluctuating weather conditions that greatly affect yield. Transportation costs affect price. Study the climate/weather map as well as gasoline prices over the past month to determine whether the cost will go up or down. Support your response with data.
<i>Teacher-Driven Tasks:</i> Read Chapter X in your textbook about protests.	Find examples of protests that have occurred in your region during the past year.	Interview individuals who have participated in protests.	<i>Student-Driven Tasks:</i> Get permission and arrange for a peaceful protest associated with an issue that impacts students' lives negatively and something many students would want to change.

Taken from Alleman, Brophy, Knighton, Ley, Botwinski, & Middlestead, 2010, p. 6.

real-world connections and applications, and it obviously leans toward less meaningful (but still important) on the continuum. We have provided an example to illustrate how homework can be developed according to gradations of meaningfulness in Table 13.2.

Principles of Meaningful Homework

We have identified several principles of meaningful homework. These principles (sometimes known as purposes or functions) are not presented in any particular order because their relative value depends on the teacher's hierarchy of subject matter goals.

Providing for Expanded Meaningfulness and Life Application of School Learning

Homework assignments offer daily opportunities for students to use what is learned in school in out-of-school settings. For example, goals for a government unit might include helping students to (1) understand and appreciate the value of government services and how the funding of these services is generated (taxes); (2) understand the importance of government regulations in their lives; and (3) become more aware of the written and unwritten rules and laws that are part of their environment. Students could be encouraged to read a journal entry that the class had compiled about governmental regulations to one or more family members and then discuss and look for examples of rules and laws that are part of the household. Charts such as Comparing Levels of Government (Table 13.3) Means and Functions of Government (Table 13.4) could be sent home as resources for use in completing the assignments.

Another example for expanding meaningfulness comes from a unit on shelter. Typical goals might include developing understanding and appreciating the types of homes that

TABLE 13.3 COMPARING LOCAL AND STATE: SOURCES OF MONEY AND FUNCTIONS AND SERVICES

Level of Government	Sources of Money	Functions and Services
Local	Property tax: The amount of tax depends on how much the property is worth. Properties include land, houses, and other buildings.	Build and repair schools, local roads. Build and maintain libraries. Provide police protection and fire and rescue services. Provide a safe water supply. Maintain local parks.
State (Adjust the income and sales tax percentages to match the tax rates levied in your state. Omit if these taxes do not apply.)	State income tax: Every time a family member gets a paycheck, a percentage of the money is held back by the employer and sent to the government. Sales tax: You pay an extra percentage every time you buy certain items (the more it costs, the more tax you pay). Gasoline tax: Drivers pay a tax for every gallon of gasoline they buy; the gasoline tax pays for building state highways.	Maintain state libraries and museums. Provide state colleges and universities. Maintain state prisons. Welfare (provide services and safety nets for people needing special help).

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TABLE 13.4 MEANS AND FUNCTIONS OF GOVERNMENT

Means of Governing Us	What Does It Do for Us? (How Does It Help Us?)
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Juice can label 2. Traffic light 3. USDA sticker on meat wrapper 4. Carton of milk 5. Teacher certification seal 6. Clothing labels 7. Computer certification label 8. USDA label on cereal box 9. Money 10. Stop sign 11. Driver's license 12. Television set 13. Police officer badge 14. Tube of toothpaste 15. Electric bill 16. House inspection document 17. Sick pay request form 18. Chauffer's license 19. Photo of a classmate from another country 20. Clock 21. State curriculum standards 	<p>The government has created the Departments of Commerce and Agriculture to inspect all of the food items that we consume to make sure that they are safe. All food products display a seal or other marking indicating that they have been inspected.</p>

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have been created over time, the changes they have undergone, and the reasons for these changes. As a follow-up to lessons comparing homes of the distant past, the recent past, and today, students could be asked to identify ways that their homes differ from the homes of earlier time periods, seek help from family members in writing their responses, and bring to school a list of differences accompanied by a paragraph explaining which type of home they would most like to live in and why (e.g., cave or stone hut, log cabin, modern frame house). In one of our classroom observations, we found that students were divided on their home preferences. About half favored the modern home because of the conveniences, but most of the others preferred the log cabin due to the adventure and curiosity associated with it. In addition, two students and their families preferred caves due to simplicity and mystery.

Constructing Meaning in Natural Ways and Engendering a Sense of Self-Efficacy

Meaningful homework assignments that focus on the unit goals provide a natural mechanism for situated learning and the social construction of knowledge, as students share and discuss with their families what they are learning in school. Interactions with families challenge them to use higher-order thinking as they apply the learning to real-world settings. In a unit on clothing, for example, one of the goals might focus on economic decision making (e.g., what constitutes a “good buy”). A homework activity might call for a family discussion about establishing a clothing budget, addressing associated issues such as how families decide when it is time to consider larger sizes for a growing child and what the implications of that economic decision are. During one of our classroom observations, a child explained to the class that if he were willing to wear the coat his older brother had outgrown, he could save his family some money. Another child proclaimed that he was wearing a “new” shirt that his mother had purchased at a garage sale for 25 cents. He proudly rationalized that he was growing quickly and the shirt was silk—expensive if purchased brand new. These examples illustrate how home assignments can provide natural opportunities for students to contribute ideas—sometimes even educate their families—as they examine the powerful ideas of choices and trade-offs that influence and regulate their social experiences and decisions (Alleman & Brophy, 2000).

Choice Making				
I need a new coat. My options are:				
Wear older brother's	Garage sale	Second time around store	On sale at department store	Other

Self-efficacy is a sense of empowerment, of being able to make a difference using what has been learned (Bandura, 1989; Bandura & Schunk, 1981; Schunk, 1991). It is a confident state of mind that says “I can do it. I can contribute. I can decide. I can figure it out.” Teachers and families can provide information and opportunities for students to make intelligent decisions in the real world—as well as begin to understand and explain why things are as they are and how they came to be. These experiences contribute to the students’ development of self-efficacy.

Extending Social Studies Education to the Home and Community by Involving Adults in Interesting and Responsible Ways

Parents and other family members usually value becoming involved with children’s learning in meaningful ways. While baking cookies for the special party is helpful, and

volunteering to help in the classroom is important, there are also more authentic ways for parents and other family members to become involved with their children and the social studies curriculum. These opportunities can serve to keep families informed about what is happening in the classroom and at the same time enhance their children's skill development and ability to apply content learned in school in meaningful ways that relate directly to their lives outside of school.

For example, despite at least four curricular opportunities to learn about the states and capitals and at least three U.S. history courses included in K–12 education, students often do not know the capital of their own state, where the largest state is located, what states border their own, the states that comprise the original thirteen colonies, the causes of the Civil War, when the United States declared its independence, and so forth. A possible cause of the problem is the isolated “book learning,” “do school” manner in which the material is covered. One way to overcome this hurdle may be to provide families with simple maps, timelines, and simulations/games (either real or virtual) to be used at home. By providing some of these resources, accompanied by instructions for activities, teachers can build learning opportunities into family discussions that include locating in time and space local places and events as well as those seen on television. Timelines could also be used to anchor family discussions about how old family members are, when their ancestors were born, or what significant historical events occurred during their lifetimes.

Plot on the timeline when family members were born.

1900	1910	1920	1930	1940	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010
------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------

Plot in green significant events that have occurred in your family.

Similarly, activities such as planning vacations or discussing news events could focus on appropriate maps to enhance discussions of current events. Outline maps can be laminated and used as placemats to spark discussion. Students can begin to see that the world is dynamic and changing, that things that impact our lives occur every day, and that significant events often happen around the world simultaneously. Students can also begin to understand and appreciate that events such as wars, floods, earthquakes, and other natural disasters and political events that happen on the other side of the world impact our lives. With technological and communication advances, people across countries and continents are becoming increasingly interconnected and interdependent.

Social studies is also rich with opportunities for involving students with family members and the community in collaborations that can be mutually satisfying and stimulating. Parents, older siblings, babysitters, family friends, neighbors, business owners, and politicians can be great collaborators for learning—and without special preparation. The key to success is careful selection of homework experiences that reflect the goals of your lesson or unit.

One of the goals of a unit on communities might be to become aware of what is being done by local citizens to ensure that the community is safe and clean. Another goal might be to pave the way for students' participation in purposeful citizen action projects. Students could survey family members or other local people to determine what they personally are doing—or would be willing to do—to have a safe and clean community. The results could be shared in class, and students could follow up by developing a plan of action. The plan could include a map of the community with a legend depicting unsafe/unclean areas and using designated symbols to indicate particular problems. Students could use the data to inform the community of current conditions. They might elect to conduct an after-school campaign to encourage people to take positive action. Some might volunteer to work with adult community leaders on projects to ensure that the area becomes a more healthy and safe place to reside.

Scavenger Hunt: During the next week, list all the activities you observe that involve local citizens keeping your community safe and clean.

What? Where? When? How?

In another lesson, one of the goals might be to develop appreciation of the importance of community and home safety, especially in an age when many children spend considerable time alone. A powerful homework assignment could call for students, with assistance from available people in the household, to conduct home safety surveys. Using the data, follow-up in-class structured discourse could provide guidance for how students themselves might respond to their home safety needs and alert family members about areas needing attention. Students could decide to collect literature to assist in guiding the proposed changes.

When studying other regions or states, students could talk with their families about connections that they have with these parts of the country through family or business contacts, use of goods from places being studied, or vacations proposed or taken in those locations. We also suggest using the Internet to access data and/or to communicate with pen pal students or relatives who live in those places.

During the study of the history of the United States, students could gather a wealth of information regarding the history of their locale—how it came to be, why, who lived there prior to settlement by Europeans, who explored and settled the place, and when it became recognized as a municipality. Local newspapers, graveyards, historical societies, and retirement facilities are invaluable resources for bringing history to life. Examining these resources could be potential “family outings” supported by teacher-provided questions that could be used during observations and interviews. The gathered information could be invaluable input to subsequent in-class discussions.

In a unit on physical regions of the United States, the goals might include understanding the relationship of natural phenomena to industries and appreciating the pros and cons of humans manipulating the environment. Here, the teacher could encourage students to allocate some out-of-school time to discuss with family members how they have experienced human manipulation of the environment. They could make observations while on a family road trip or during a walking tour of their neighborhood. They could generate a list of the kinds of workers engaged in tasks that change the environment. Students could be encouraged to bring in photographs, postcards, or newspaper articles as validation of these experiences.

How have humans manipulated our environment?

<i>Nature of Manipulation</i>	<i>Where?</i>	<i>Results?</i>
1.		
2.		

All of these learning opportunities and a host of others that could be generated can effectively bring to life goals focusing on personalizing history, expanding understanding and appreciation for the past, helping students position themselves in time and space, and acquiring a greater sensitivity toward the environment and the ways that humans have interacted with it.

The collaborative learning that occurs outside the classroom has the potential for improving in-class participation by more enlightened learners of all abilities and for creating a more informed cadre of human resources sprinkled throughout the community. Students can have opportunities to become involved with their parents and other adults in positive and productive relationships, and as a bonus these adults will have opportunities to enjoy non-threatening and personally rewarding involvement in their children's education.

Taking Advantage of the Students' Diversity by Using It as a Learning Resource

Too often, differences among students are viewed as problems. However, these differences can be used as assets: as opportunities for students to begin with what they know best and link their knowledge to the experiences of others. For example, one of the goals of a food unit might be to develop an understanding and appreciation of the role that culture plays in determining what foods are eaten and when. As a home assignment, family members could be encouraged to discuss the foods they eat that are based on their culture. Encourage families to seek out friends whose cultures are different and learn about their practices.

Consider your students as a resource. Create a classroom census whereby each student indicates the size (how many family members) and composition (age and gender of family members). Compare the range of families represented and use the differences as a springboard for a discussion about family.

Goals for a unit on family might include helping students to understand and appreciate the contributions of their ancestors, including some of their family's customs and traditions or those they have embraced as the result of living with their adoptive parents or with other caregivers. For the home assignment, students could interview an older family member or friend about his or her ancestors, make a family tree, talk about special things learned from the individuals represented on the family tree, and describe a family custom or tradition that has been passed down from one generation to another that is still enjoyed regularly or on special occasions. This activity would elicit an impressive and useful range of information for students to share with the class.

One of the goals of a shelter unit might be to develop an appreciation for the opportunities that people may have to exercise choice in meeting their shelter needs and wants. Students can be encouraged to discuss with their families the choices they have made regarding where to live and why. In one classroom we observed, this activity stimulated a lot of in- and out-of-class discourse, and on follow-up surveys, family members indicated that the exercise got their children to think more broadly about why they live where they do, where they would like to live and why, and the trade-offs associated with renting versus buying. Families also indicated that they had never before thought of explaining their choices to their children. One said, "The assignment gave me a forum for giving reasons for my actions. In fact, I could remove what I'd formerly called guilt" (Alleman & Brophy, 1998).

Renting vs. Buying			
Advantages of Renting	Disadvantages of Renting	Advantages of Buying	Disadvantages of Buying
Allows mobility and flexibility	Cannot make changes to the property	Capital investment	Limits mobility

Another goal in a shelter unit might be for students to understand and appreciate the range of homes that have been created over time, the changes homes have undergone, and the reasons for these changes. Students could take home copies of a chart comparing the distant past, the recent past, and today, and identify differences between modern homes and those in earlier time periods. Older family members could be asked to help the students write responses in the appropriate spaces on the chart.

Another goal of a shelter unit might be for students to understand and appreciate how technology, inventions, and discoveries have enabled people today to live in controlled environments and to begin to grasp how these conveniences “work.” As a homework assignment, families could be asked to assist their child in touring their home looking for ways that the family has taken advantage of modern conveniences such as heating, cooling, water, and lighting. They also could be encouraged to show their children how utilities are made available to the home and routed and controlled through pipes, faucets, thermostats, fuses, circuit breakers, and switches. The drawings, photos, and explanations that this assignment yielded during our observations indicated enthusiasm and new-found knowledge. For example, one student shared his drawing and explanation of the furnace and said, “Ours is always broken. I sat down with the furnace guy on his last call to our house and said, ‘Now tell me how this thing is supposed to work’ ” (Alleman & Brophy, 1998). This new knowledge draws upon powerful ideas in history (how technology has influenced human life over time) and geography (how humans have interacted with the environment to meet their needs).

Having students gather data about their own families to share with peers can create immediate interest in an often bland, repetitive topic. If students live within extended family arrangements, for example, they might develop responses to a list of questions: What role does Grandmother play when Mother works nights? How is her role different from what it would be if she lived out of state? What are the gains in your home as the result of the extended family arrangement? What are the potential problems that need to be worked out? How is your living arrangement similar or dissimilar from the one you read about describing a family in Japan? These attributes of extended families can be compared to those of nuclear families in our culture and to those of extended families in other cultures, noting similarities as well as differences.

Data gathered from family members can also enhance students’ appreciation of diverse perspectives on social studies content and engender the realization that social studies is broadly focused and frequently open to debate. For example, suppose one of the goals of a social studies unit is for the students to understand and appreciate the global connections between their community and one in East Asia. Typically, students would be asked to read textbook material, discuss it in class, and list connections on the chalkboard. This lesson would have more impact if students were asked first to interview the adults in their households and/or neighborhoods about their views of global connections with East Asia. For example, a parent or neighbor who is presently laid off from an automobile plant might feel quite different than a parent or neighbor who sells Japanese-made audio/video equipment at an appliance store. Interviewing could be coupled with an investigation of the home to determine the number and nature of goods from East Asia that are found there. Homes with access to the Internet could provide

still another rich resource and serve to illustrate the nearness of places formerly considered remote. These data then would be funneled back into the classroom to aid students in achieving the “documented” realization that there is a range of beliefs and values about globalization in the community that is directly tied to people’s life experiences.

These homework experiences can be rewarding for all of the individuals involved and the data that are “harvested” during follow-up discussions can be provocative, insightful, and rich in diverse examples. It is helpful if the teacher provides snapshots into his or her personal life as well to model sharing and add human interest elements to activities.

Personalizing the Curriculum and Reflecting on the Here and Now

Home assignments can enhance students’ awareness and understanding of the contexts of their daily lives and the lives of their families. For example, goals of a unit on money might be to develop an understanding and appreciation for budgeting as a tool for managing money, an understanding of opportunity cost, and the ability to apply these concepts to life outside of school. The teacher might use his or her own budget and a hypothetical child’s budget to illustrate major understandings and facilitate discussion. As homework, students could talk with their families about budgeting and bring to school examples of how opportunity cost plays out in their households.

In a unit on communication, a viable goal might be to develop students’ awareness of how they spend their out-of-school time, and in particular how much of it is spent with mass communication during a week. Class members, with the assistance of family members, could be asked to account for their television viewing (or Internet usage) using a standard form provided for easy recording. The data could be returned to school and used to inform construction of a graph of students’ television viewing and a subsequent discussion of the results (Alleman & Brophy, 2003b).

Another goal of the communication unit might be to develop an understanding and appreciation of the variety of ways television influences its viewers. After learning about commercials and advertising techniques, students could write letters to their families describing the important things they learned about television viewing and identify at least one recommendation they would like their families to consider during future viewing (e.g., “Don’t believe everything the commercials tell you,” “Some sports shoes cost a lot more than other brands because the companies pay popular sports figures to advertise their product. Check to make sure those shoes are worth the extra dollars,” and so forth). Families could be asked to discuss how commercials have influenced them and what new questions they might want to ask before they purchase advertised products.

Considering Learning Opportunities That Are Not Cost Effective on School Time

It is critically important that homework activities are designed well. Time (for you, for your classroom, for your students, and for their families) is valuable, and a poorly designed homework assignment is not a good use of time and can even interfere with learning. Students’ homes and the surrounding community are filled with learning resources that might not be cost effective for use during school, such as an organized field trip, but could be explored by one or more individuals who might be asked to visit a particular site and report back to the class. Suppose, for example, that an intermediate-grade class were going to the study local government. Because of the expenses of bus rental and the complications involved in rescheduling classes, it may not be feasible for the whole class to attend a city council meeting. However, a few students and their families could volunteer to attend such a meeting where they could serve

as observers, data gatherers, and primary sources for a follow-up in-class discussion. The entire class would be involved in the initial reading and planning. The active student participants would go to the session armed with questions from their peers and return having fulfilled a class mission. The follow-up discussion could address the preliminary peer questions and the participants' observations. Such an out-of-school opportunity should serve to whet the appetite of others and provide the class with another avenue for becoming informed and involved citizens of the community. Students would be expected to take turns taking on special assignments with their parents, so that their classmates could benefit from a range of field trips that would not be feasible within the parameters of most school budgets.

Suppose a class were studying government with special attention to rules and laws. Taking the whole class on a walking tour of the community looking for signs of unwritten and written rules and laws might be too time-consuming; however, this task could be a very productive and meaningful use of after-school time. Students could easily combine this assignment with the regular school bus ride or walk home or running errands with their family members. For signs of unwritten rules, they could study human behavior and routine (e.g., do young children hold older family members' hands while crossing the street? do people use lower voices in certain indoor settings? do people wait their turn in line?); for signs of written rules, they could examine signs to parks, traffic signs, and traffic lights. For best results, the teacher should provide a data retrieval form so that the next day's discussion would not be based simply on memory.

Other examples of homework that are not cost effective if done during school time, yet could be useful when structured appropriately and tied to in-school goals, include watching a specific television show with an eye toward examining gender roles or acquiring knowledge and appreciation about a particular place or group of people (e.g., a special program on women in Islamic countries). These out-of-school learning opportunities expand students' learning horizons, serve as validity checks for book learning, and provide authentic connections that extend beyond the school day.

Keeping the Curriculum Up to Date

Social studies education courses based on textbooks as their chief data sources are often years behind world events. Moreover, sometimes the textbooks children use were written years or even decades earlier. In such cases, it is important to supplement the text with learning opportunities involving newspapers, magazines, television broadcasts, and Internet resources. The additional information can be used to inform discussions of the changes occurring and the challenges created by a new set of conditions. Instead of only reading outdated material regarding U.S. leadership and our country's affairs, students learn at the cutting edge of national and world developments. For example, discussion could be focused on the effects of the events of September 11, 2001. How has our country changed since that historical event? Engagement of adults in the students' households or neighborhoods in discussion of such questions may cause them to view their children in a new light and create a cross-generational dialogue about a significant topic of real interest.

Principles for Designing and Implementing Meaningful Homework Activities

We will consider meaningful homework within the context of the principles for planning and implementing social studies learning activities that we described in Chapter 11. These principles include four primary criteria that all learning activities must meet: (a) goal relevance; (b) appropriate level of difficulty; (c) feasibility; and (d) cost. Secondary

principles to consider when choosing from among activities that meet all the primary criteria include: (e) allow students to accomplish several goals simultaneously; (f) are viewed as enjoyable, or at least as meaningful and worthwhile; (g) involve natural, holistic, or authentic applications of learning rather than isolated skills practice or artificial exercises; (h) engage students in higher-order thinking; and (i) are adaptable to accommodate individual differences in interest or abilities. Activities should be structured and scaffolded by teachers in ways that help students to engage in them with awareness of their goals and metacognitive control of their learning strategies.

These principles also apply to homework activities, with some minor modifications. First, out-of-school learning can use the students' total environment to provide data or learning resources, which makes certain activities feasible that would not be feasible in the classroom. Also, cost effectiveness does not need to be assigned as high a priority. Class time is limited and needs to be concentrated on lessons and structuring of assignments, but once students are clear about what they need to do, they can work on assignments outside of class. They also can work on individually negotiated or time-consuming projects that complement the group lessons and activities that occur during class time.

Homework opportunities provide a natural mechanism for nurturing intergenerational communication by encouraging students to share and discuss what they are learning in school with their families. The idea is to use home assignments to provide a forum for interaction, not to suggest that families are to "teach" what was not accomplished at school. The assignments should encourage students to talk about what they are learning with their families, to take more responsibility for their learning, and to appreciate that learning is continuous and lifelong (Alleman & Brophy, 1994).

Consider using Mem Fox's Wilfrid Gordon McDonald Partridge, a poignant book about a young boy's relationship with people in a retirement home and his quest to understand the meaning of the word, "memory." This book shows the power of intergenerational communication. How might you incorporate it into your class?

Teacher and Family Involvement

Home assignments are one way to model and establish the norm that everybody has the capacity and the opportunity to learn out of school. We observed one student exclaim to the teacher, "You are doing the homework too!" The teacher explained that she also was learning new things about her community. On another occasion, a student with a rather puzzled look said, "I thought you just cooked up things to keep us busy. Look, you are doing them too!" Soon students come to realize that if the teacher participates in home assignments—and actually brings data back to the class to share—they must be important and worthwhile.

Having the teacher model the act of returning home assignments is a good way to encourage students to complete homework and overcome one of the teacher's major

concerns. Another concern relates to family willingness and capacity to participate in home learning opportunities. Many think that helping their child is cheating, that “I may not know the right answer,” that “I simply don’t have the time needed to help,” or that “It’s the teacher’s job to educate my child.” Overcoming these obstacles does not happen overnight. It requires ongoing education about the power of authentic learning out of school and the role families can play in enhancing student interest in curriculum content as well as potentially influencing student achievement. It requires explaining to families through letters, conferences, and public presentations how family members can help their children and the thinking behind home assignments in social studies.

It is helpful if you as the teacher model what is being asked in home assignments to ensure that students understand the goals and directions for accomplishing the tasks. Establish the mindset that the home assignments are vital to learning because they add meaningfulness and new perspectives. Make sure you use the results in subsequent lessons. Create the expectation that students will return their completed homework assignments, and when students (and their families) fall short of this expectation, a friendly reminder note or call is in order. Important factors to remember when assigning homework are time required to complete the assignment, the age of the students, typical family involvement, and the scope of the homework. If students forget to bring in their homework or turn it in late, asking them to recall from memory their responses on the homework, or using the homework when the students eventually bring it in are other subtle ways of indicating the importance of the assignments and their authentic connections to the in-school curriculum.

Technology Tips

Many teachers use class websites to communicate information to families about curriculum, homework assignments, special projects, upcoming events, and even students’ progress (using a private “parent page” where parents can log in to view their child’s progress). Consider the kind of information you would include on your own website. Be sure to introduce the website to students and to families (during an open house) so that readers are familiar with what information is available and how to access it.

Guidelines for Framing Homework Assignments

- *Make sure that every assignment relates to the social studies education goals for the lesson/unit.*
- *Make sure students can clearly articulate the purpose of the home assignment.*
- *Educate families about the nature and purposes of the assignments.*
- *Provide students with notes to families describing the assignments as well as materials such as charts, tables, worksheets, interview schedules, and so forth for retrieving data. Provide examples and thought starters where appropriate. These materials make it easier for families to do the assignments and usually result in a higher return of information to inform future class discussions.*
- *Establish time frames appropriate for the tasks.*
- *Expect all students to complete the assignments and make sure you acknowledge the returned data in subsequent lessons. The student responses contemporize the in-school curriculum and bring the content to life.*

*Note: We reiterate that there is a need and place for basic skills practice (role/reinforcement) at home on occasion. Make sure you make this clear to families and

frequently remind them that some home assignments are critical for children to master skills through practice, while most home assignments are designed for students to make meaningful connections between school and the world beyond school.

Summary

We have described principles of homework opportunities as a means of enhancing the social studies curriculum and expanding the conception of homework. Meaningful homework, if explained properly to students, parents and other family members, and community, will enhance the meaningfulness of the traditional social studies curriculum, begin paving the way for lifelong learning, and enhance the authenticity of what is learned in school.

Although we have suggested many different ways in which homework opportunities can enhance the curriculum, most of these are elaborations on a few key ideas. One is that meaningful homework can provide opportunities for students to think critically about how some of the ideas learned in school apply to their lives out of school and, in the process, make personal decisions about issues that they raise. In theory, much of what is in the social studies curriculum is there because it is thought to be important as a means to prepare students to cope with the demands of modern living and to function as responsible citizens in our society. Unless students are encouraged and given opportunities to apply what they are learning to their lives outside of school, however, they may not see or appreciate these connections and thus may not get the intended citizen-preparation benefits. In a time when so much attention is given to standards and high-stakes testing, it is important to ensure that what we expect students to learn can be understood, appreciated, and readily applied to their lives.

A second key idea is that diversity in students' family, ethnic, and socioeconomic backgrounds and life experiences can provide valuable case material for the application of concepts and principles learned in school. With diversity as a recurring theme in social studies curricula, authentically addressing it through home assignments provides a context of respect and appreciation for students' home backgrounds.

A third key idea is that meaningful homework can provide opportunities to involve parents and other family members in the school's agenda in nonthreatening and personally rewarding ways. Families may feel irritated or threatened if asked to help with homework that they do not understand themselves, but they are likely to be pleased to be asked to serve as resources by answering their children's questions about what life was like when they were younger, how they reacted to a major news event in the past, the details of what they do at work, the factors involved in economic decisions, the places they have visited, or the trade-offs involved in their jobs.

The payoffs of incorporating meaningful authentic homework into social studies lessons seem obvious. These experiences should encourage students to respect their families in new ways, reinforce familial bonds, make them more enthusiastic learners (with higher achievement levels as an anticipated byproduct), and support their development of self-efficacy perceptions in the social domain.

Reflective Questions

1. Imagine that one of your district's highest priorities for the upcoming year is to promote more meaningful homework. For many families, this will be unfamiliar, and it will take some convincing in order to realize positive results. How will you approach the challenge? Explain.
2. You have been asked to speak to a parent group in your school community (or write an article for the school newsletter). The topic is "Family Participation for Promoting Powerful Social Studies." What will you include in your presentation that relates to meaningful homework?
3. Imagine that diversity has been identified as one of the top priorities at your school. Teachers have been asked to share proposals for addressing it. Yours emphasizes meaningful homework in social studies. What points will you make to convince your colleagues that a systematic approach to diversity involving families with the curriculum can be powerful?
4. What do you view as the most challenging aspects of expanding the curriculum and making it more meaningful through home-school connections? How will you overcome them?

- 5. Research indicates that student achievement is often impacted by family involvement in school-related matters. How can meaningful homework assignments in social studies promote this? How might you monitor this practice to determine its influence on student learning?
- 6. The authors of this text have observed special needs students reaping enormous benefits from

social studies assignments that include home-school connections. How would you explain this? What might you do to accelerate this practice in your classroom? Select a unit topic and provide some concrete examples.

Your Turn

Select an upcoming social studies unit. Review the goals and big ideas that you intend to feature. Then ask yourself: What out-of-school learning opportunities could be designed to expand meaningfulness and enrich the overall social studies experience? Prepare and implement at least three home assignments for the unit. See Figure 13.1 for a sample planning format.

Be sure to inform families well in advance and clearly state your purposes for the assignments. A sample letter

has been provided (Figure 13.2). Modify it to meet your specific needs. You might also consider having a note accompany each home assignment, at least until students and families get into the habit of good practice. Keep a reflective journal as your unit unfolds.

For more examples of home assignments aligned with goals and big ideas, review the units published in Alleman and Brophy (2001, 2002, 2003b) and Alleman, et. al., 2010).

FIGURE 13.1 Planning Home Assignments Around Goals and Big Ideas

Goal for the Unit	Big Ideas for the Unit	Appropriate Home Assignment That Aligns with the Big Idea(s) and Goals
To develop an understanding and an appreciation for what citizenship means and how it can be practiced within the community.	<div>Example</div> <div>1. Good citizens tend to be respectful, to think and act for the good of the community, and to be open to ideas of others that may be different from their own.</div> <div>2. _____</div> <div>_____</div> <div>3. _____</div> <div>_____</div> <div>4. _____</div> <div>_____</div> <div>_____</div>	<div>Example</div> <div>1. Have students discuss with their families what citizenship means to them and how they practice it in their community. Provide a good citizen worksheet with a couple of examples as starters.</div> <div>2. _____</div> <div>_____</div> <div>3. _____</div> <div>_____</div> <div>4. _____</div> <div>_____</div> <div>_____</div>

(See Alleman & Brophy, 2003b)

FIGURE 13.2 Sample Letter to Families

Dear Family Members:

This year we are taking part in a new, exciting way to learn social studies. Our units of study will include _____. In each of the units, we will emphasize the connections between what is learned in school with students' lives out of school. Our hope is to have students who are more excited and motivated to learn about the world within their reach and far away.

As family members, you will be asked to contribute your knowledge and experiences in this area as well. Some home assignments might include such things as collecting pictures, watching the news or a specified television program with your child and discussing some particular questions, responding to questions regarding your experience of an event in history, or facilitating the gathering of objects or observable examples that reflect a key idea.

The intent is that your family responses will be returned to school so that our class conversations can be expanded and that overall social studies will be more memorable. I appreciate your cooperation and welcome any questions you may have.

WHAT IS THE RESEARCH BASE THAT INFORMS POWERFUL SOCIAL STUDIES TEACHING?

Barbara Knighton, Experienced Teacher

TEACHER VOICE

When I read the title to this chapter, I literally sat straight up in my chair ... RESEARCH! When I started teaching 20 years ago, I would have passed this chapter by quickly. However, research seems to come up in every staff meeting and curriculum development conversation we have. We are being asked to look for and use research-based strategies in our classrooms more and more. Any information about finding good research and incorporating that into my teaching is more than exciting.

Right away this chapter grabbed my attention by talking about high stakes testing. I'm certain that there isn't a classroom teacher in America who doesn't feel some sort of pressure from the NCLB (No Child Left Behind) legislation. As I read this section, I found myself rereading and pondering changes in my fall lesson plans. In our state, the testing occurs in the fall, shortly after students return to school. I knew that I needed to make some adjustments to my test prep activities, and finally here were some practical suggestions.

In particular, this book suggested connecting the standards for social studies and literacy as well as going beyond the minimum that is required. Reading this gave me permission and justification to take my students further into social studies, especially if I could pair my social studies content with literacy skills. Writing is a major focus for us, particularly writing in

Image Source/Getty Images



response to reading. Ah ha! If I could find reading selections that were rich in content, I could create opportunities to get more social studies into my already over-packed day. I was thrilled to find practical, useful ideas in just the first few pages of this chapter!

I was excited to read more, and next came “The 12 Principles.” With any book I read, I’m looking for ways to improve my teaching practices, not just interesting theory and the 12 Principles are exactly that. As I read, I found myself jotting down notes and making lists of ideas to use this school year and in the future.

The authors should be applauded for using this set of principles as a foundation for this textbook. These principles can be applied across subject areas and grade levels. Each principle includes research that supports it as well as suggestions and information for classroom application. This structure not only helps the reader consider and plan to use the principles but also provides supporting rationale and reasoning that can be used in professional conversations. More and more all teachers, myself included, are being asked to justify curricular decisions and this chapter provides a strong research basis for the principles discussed.

Most of all, reading this chapter reminded me of a long-held belief that good teaching that promotes understanding, appreciation, and life application will prepare students to perform well on any test much better than canned, test-prep programs do. Therefore, if I use these principles to help create cohesive, connected lessons focused around big ideas and search for authentic uses for the skills we learn, my students will be ready for anything that comes our way!

This book began with an overview of social studies as a subject within the larger school curriculum. In the preface and first chapter, we delineated the nature of social studies as a pan-disciplinary subject emphasizing citizen education goals and also described the major curricular and instructional approaches that have been developed. The idea was to create a context within which to situate our beliefs as developed throughout the rest of the book.

In this final chapter, we want to reconnect to the big picture, this time situating the contents of the book within an even larger context: theory and research on curriculum and instruction in general (not just in social studies). A great deal of good research on teaching has accumulated over the last 50 years, most notably research on teaching school subjects for understanding, appreciation, and life application. The major findings of this research are reflected in our beliefs about elementary social studies education, as developed in previous chapters.

We conclude the book with a brief synthesis of these research findings for two major reasons. First, the synthesis provides you with a *higher level organizer*—a cognitive structure within which to organize and assimilate the many concepts and principles you have studied. The synthesis features 12 principles around which to structure your learning in a network of connected knowledge. Structuring your knowledge this way will make it easier for you to remember and access in application situations.

Second, it is important to know about and implement research-based principles of effective teaching. These principles have enduring validity and applicability, not just for social studies but for all school subjects.

The Current High-Stakes Testing Environment

Education will always be partly an art, but it also should be partly applied science in which an established base of validated procedures is gradually expanded and refined in response to gradual advances in its scientific knowledge base. Unfortunately, education in this country has not had a history of responding in a consensual way to advances in the knowledge base. Instead, it has featured often hotly contested calls for relatively extreme measures, typically based on educational or political ideology rather than reputable research. Some of the “reforms” have been ill-conceived and impractical, but essentially harmless. Others have been counterproductive—doing more harm than good.

In our view, the recent and ongoing high-stakes testing era has been one of the most counterproductive periods in our educational history. At a time when more and more of society’s burdens and responsibilities have been shifted from the family and other social institutions to the school, politicians have been emphasizing “reforms” that feature unrealistic demands and punitive responses to failures. Initially in many states, and later at the federal level legislation, schools have been forced to administer more and more tests, with higher and higher stakes attached to students’ test scores.

Although contrary to the spirit of many educational purposes and goals, high-stakes testing policies would be difficult for informed educators to contest if they were based on solid research or demonstrably successful. They are neither. These policies do little if any good and a lot of harm. It is true that mobilizing to prepare students to take high-stakes tests will raise their test scores, but the raised test scores do not mean much when the tests are mostly confined to memory for discrete information or disconnected subskills, and the improved scores mostly reflect specific test preparation rather than improved learning across the curriculum as a whole. In Texas, for example, a focus on preparing students to take the state’s achievement test did in fact succeed in raising students’ scores on those tests, but the students’ scores on national assessments, college entrance exams, and the like remained unchanged (Amrein & Berliner, 2003). In high-stakes testing environments, improved test scores no longer have the meaning they might have had before the stakes were raised.

Even former advocates of accountability efforts have concluded that recent emphases on testing and accountability have “hijacked” the standards movement, turning it into a system of punishment and rewards rather than one of learning and education (Ravitch, 2010). The No Child Left Behind Act has made testing and accountability a central part of school reform. Unfortunately, such emphasis has had deleterious effects on curriculum and instruction, particularly in social studies education. As we have mentioned before, since social studies is not tested with the same frequency as literacy and mathematics, the instructional time allotted to it has decreased. Thus, social studies teaching has become a victim of the accountability era in several ways.

The benefits of mobilizing to raise test scores are dubious, but the costs are not. Thomas (2005) identified and documented quite a list of what he called “collateral damage” from high-stakes testing: narrowing of the curriculum, both in the sense of cutting back on teaching other subjects to focus on teaching the subjects tested, and in the sense of focusing instruction in the subjects tested on the material likely to be included in the test, at the expense of a richer coverage; the high costs of implementing testing and its

consequences (paying for the tests themselves, test administration and scoring, test preparation materials, follow-up tutoring and other remediation materials and activities, and so forth, eats up a lot of budget and often leads to reduction or elimination of art and music programs, sports teams, and other nonacademic functions of schooling); both teachers and students get bored and frustrated with the heavy focus on test preparation in lieu of a richer curriculum; lower achieving students face the possibility of being retained in grade for another year in the short run, which markedly increases the likelihood that they will drop out of school in the long run; and a combination of poor fit between the curriculum and the tests, unrealistic expectations, and punitive policies toward schools and students that fail to meet them create unnecessary anxiety and frustration for all concerned.

Most of the reform movements that have come and gone in the past were fads supported by ideological rationales but not kept in place by legal mandates. However, even legal mandates will be reversed when they become political liabilities to their sponsors. Because they are so unrealistic and counterproductive, many mandates resulting from reform movements are likely to be reshaped into something more sensible. Perhaps at that point, the nation will be ready for research-based guidance on curriculum and instruction.

So What Can You Do in the Meantime?

In the meantime, you will have to negotiate some kind of compromise between focusing exclusively on teaching for understanding and focusing exclusively on preparing students for high-stakes tests. You cannot ignore the standards, the tests, and the pressures associated with them, but there is no need to view them as the complete curriculum or to buy into the “grill and drill” mentality that focuses narrowly on test preparation. We suggest the following guidelines to help you act responsibly to include appropriate efforts to prepare your students for achievement tests, yet embed these efforts within a powerful social studies program.

Content

1. Accept the fact that the national and state standards identify content and skills to be taught at your grade level.
2. Familiarize yourself with these standards, including the content and skills specified for other grade levels. This will help you to do appropriate foreshadowing and reviewing at your grade.
3. Go beyond the content and skills allocated to your grade level in an effort to provide meaningful context and enrichment to your units and lessons. Remember, the standards only specify minimum expectations.
4. As you plan your lessons and units, be aware of standards and benchmarks not only for social studies but for other core areas. Review these standards periodically so you can fill in the gaps. When you actively look for them, you will find many opportunities to address standards naturally in the process of developing social studies content, as well as opportunities for adding standards-related content or skills in ways that make sense.
5. Plan authentic home assignments that match the social studies goals and actively engage students in learning opportunities that are not cost effective at school, but can involve students and their families in powerful ways. These assignments can promote student interest in social studies and enhance meaningfulness.

6. If you work in a district where the textbook is viewed as the curriculum, use it as one of many sources. For example, ask students to read a section and ask, “What could be added?” or “How does the idea or issue relate to our lives?”

Time Allocation

1. Work within local mandates for allocating instructional time to different subjects. If you lack sufficient time to teach social studies because inordinate time is allocated to literacy, use social studies texts and literature selections as the content base for some of the literacy activities. This is likely to improve test scores in both subjects.
2. Along with primarily oral whole-class and small-group activities, include frequent opportunities for students to work independently on written assignments, especially assignments that call for formulating and writing extended text in response to questions calling for higher-order thinking. If your district is obsessed with test preparation, your students probably will get more than enough practice responding to multiple-choice tests in literacy and mathematics, but not enough opportunities to develop and apply higher-order thinking skills.

Testing

1. To minimize scoring costs and complications, the tests used in high-stakes testing programs typically follow multiple-choice formats and emphasize memory for specific information rather than higher-order thinking skills. Consequently, see that your students receive sufficient experience with these standardized test formats so that they are not unnecessarily stressed when they take the high-stakes tests.
2. However, make sure that your teacher-made assessment tools reflect the full range of your instructional goals. Include questions calling for higher-order thinking as part of your larger effort to go beyond minimal requirements.
3. In general, provide all students with sufficient experience working independently on assignments and tests to ensure individual accountability, communicate high expectations, and build test readiness.

Quality of Curriculum and Instruction

1. Assume responsibility for designing a powerful social studies program that reflects the five qualities of powerful teaching emphasized in the NCSS Position Statement (NCSS, 1993; 2008) as well as the 12 principles outlined below.
2. Recognize that although standards identify expected content and skill learning, they do not delineate the curriculum as a whole, and especially not the quality of the classroom discourse and the learning activities. The *how* of teaching is up to you! As the teacher, you are the key to the depth and quality of your students’ learning. You can make the difference in their level of interest in social studies—and their motivation to learn.

How Some Teachers Have Coped

Case studies reported by Wills (2007) illustrate both the challenges and some of the potential coping strategies brought on by high-stakes testing pressures on the social studies curriculum. Wills observed in middle-grade classrooms in an elementary school

located in a poor neighborhood in California that during the school year immediately following mandated increases in the instructional time allocated to literacy and mathematics (the focus of the state's high-stakes testing program). The school's principal left it up to individual teachers to decide how they would restructure their weekly schedules to accommodate this mandate. One teacher did so by eliminating physical education, reasoning that her students had greater needs for a rich science and social studies curriculum. The changes made by most teachers, though, had the effect of reducing the time allocated to science and social studies to less than half of what it had been before. The teachers were still expected to cover the same material (in social studies, national and state history through the Civil War).

Teachers who taught a barren social studies curriculum with little or no emphasis on thoughtfulness in classroom discourse simply persisted with this approach, except that now they required their students to read and answer questions about textbook chapters at home so that they could spend most class time going over the answers. Meanwhile, teachers who understood the value of thoughtful discourse scrambled to find ways to retain this emphasis while still addressing the full range of prescribed content in less than half the time. One teacher's strategies were only partially successful. To save as much time as possible for class discussion, she cut back on less essential content and instituted shortcuts such as dividing students into small groups and jigsawing a textbook lesson in order to "get through it more quickly." She directed students to specific pages to look for answers to questions on study sheets, requiring them to read their textbooks at home rather than during class, and substituting short films for some textbook sections. Despite these adjustments, she fell increasingly behind schedule as the year progressed, so that planned discussions increasingly were cut short or omitted in order to push on through the content. Classes became more and more recitation, less and less discussion. Even so, she never got to the last several chapters of the book.

The most successful teacher also covered less content. However, this was because she eliminated or reduced coverage of content she deemed less important, not because she ran out of time. Each of her social studies units included discussions, activities, and other projects that asked students to analyze, interpret, or apply their learning to address challenging problems or issues. She made time for this by skipping certain chapters of the textbooks and eliminating the need to work systematically through the other chapters by providing her students with succinct summaries of key facts and main ideas. Although she expected her students to read relevant chapters for background and occasionally exposed them to videos or other input sources, her classroom discussions were focused on the material contained in her handouts. The difference could be seen in her unit on European exploration, settlement, and establishment of the mission system in California. Instead of basing it on the 45-page textbook chapter, she based it on 28 pages (including maps and illustrations) that briefly and clearly covered the important information she thought her students needed to know.

She also made time for student thinking in social studies by incorporating social studies content into language arts lessons. The afternoon language arts period typically included 25 minutes of either silent reading or writing instruction. The teacher frequently used this time for students to read social studies information and work on writing assignments calling for them to analyze or apply this information. Her solution was not completely satisfactory, but it did enable her to sustain a focus on big ideas and thoughtful classroom discourse in social studies, despite the mandated increases in time allocated to literacy and mathematics.



A Synthesis of Generic Principles of Good Teaching

The following 12 principles of good teaching have served as the informal underpinning to our text. We include them here to support your efforts to move beyond the current standards and rhetoric with confidence. Implementing these principles will help you teach all subjects effectively, and in particular offer your students a robust social studies program.

For much of the twentieth century, basing curriculum and instruction theories and reform ideas on ideology rather than research was not only possible but necessary because there was not very much research available to inform the enterprise. Over the last 50 years, however, a great deal of relevant, useful, and mostly mutually supportive research has accumulated. It is now possible to make confident, research-based statements about many aspects of teaching. Some of this research-based information is specific to particular grade levels, subject areas, and so on, but some of it is relatively generic, applicable to most aspects of teaching in typical classrooms.

One of us was asked to develop a brief synthesis of these research findings for a booklet in a series sponsored by the International Academy of Education (Brophy, 1999). The charge was to focus on generic aspects of good teaching, rooted in principles that reflect aspects of classrooms that are much more similar than different across countries and cultures. Most subject-matter teaching involves whole-class lessons in which content is developed during teacher-student interaction, followed by practice and application activities that students work on individually or in pairs or small groups. The student/teacher ratio and other constraints cause most instruction to be directed primarily to the class as a whole, with the teacher seeking to individualize around the margins. This description fits the situation of most teachers who teach social studies to elementary students, so much of the content of this book can be subsumed within the 12 principles that anchor the synthesis.

We realize that teaching using these principles may appear to be a daunting task. Table 14.1, *The 12 Principles of Good Teaching*, included at the end of the chapter, provides a brief description of each principle and an example of a teacher using the principle to assist you in visualizing its application in a classroom setting. The table also indicates the chapter(s) that relate directly to each principle, although bear in mind that each of the 12 principles can and should be applied broadly across the content of this book.

Introduction to the 12 Principles

There is broad agreement among educators associated with all school subjects that students should learn each subject with understanding of its big ideas, appreciation of its value, and the capability and disposition to apply it in their lives outside of school. Analyses of research done in the different subject areas have identified some commonalities in conclusions drawn about curricular, instructional, and assessment practices that foster this kind of learning. If phrased as general principles rather than specific behavioral rules, these emerging guidelines can be seen as mutually supportive components of a coherent approach to teaching that applies across subjects and situations. Thus, it is possible to identify generic features of good teaching, although not to outline a specific instructional model to be implemented on a step-by-step basis.

Much of the research support for these principles comes from studies of relationships between classroom processes and student outcomes. However, some principles are rooted in the logic of instructional design (e.g., the need for alignment among a curriculum's goals, content, instructional methods, and assessment measures). In addition, attention was paid to emergent theories of teaching and learning (e.g., sociocultural, social constructivist) and to the standards statements circulated by organizations representing the major school subjects. Priority was given to principles that have been shown to be applicable under ordinary classroom conditions and associated with progress toward desired student outcomes.

These principles rest on a few fundamental assumptions about optimizing curriculum and instruction. First, school curricula subsume different types of learning that call for somewhat different types of teaching, so no single teaching strategy (e.g., transmission, inquiry) can be the method of choice for all occasions. An optimal program will feature a mixture of instructional methods and learning activities.

Second, within any school subject or learning domain, students' instructional needs change as their expertise develops. Consequently, what constitutes an optimal mixture of instructional methods and learning activities will evolve as school years, instructional units, and even individual lessons progress.

Third, students should learn at high levels of mastery yet progress through the curriculum steadily. This implies that, at any given time, curriculum content and learning activities need to be difficult enough to provide some challenge and extend learning, but not so difficult as to leave many students confused or frustrated. Instruction should focus on the zone of proximal development, which is the range of knowledge and skills that students are not yet ready to learn on their own but can learn with help from the teacher.

Fourth, although 12 principles are highlighted for emphasis and discussed individually, each principle should be applied within the context of its relationships with the others. That is, the principles are meant to be understood as mutually supportive components of a coherent approach to teaching in which the teacher's plans and expectations, the classroom learning environment and management system, the curriculum content and instructional materials, and the learning activities and assessment methods are all aligned as means to help students attain intended outcomes.

The 12 Principles

1. Supportive Classroom Climate *Students learn best within cohesive and caring learning communities.*

Research findings. Productive contexts for learning feature an ethic of caring that pervades teacher-student and student-student interactions and honors the individuality and diversity among students who differ in gender, race, ethnicity, culture, socioeconomic status, special needs, or other personal characteristics. Students are expected to assume individual and group responsibilities for managing instructional materials and activities and for supporting the personal, social, and academic well being of all members of the classroom community (Good & Brophy, 2003; Sergiovanni, 1994).

In the classroom. To create a climate for molding their students into a cohesive and supportive learning community, teachers need to display personal attributes that will make them effective as models and socializers: a cheerful disposition, friendliness, emotional maturity, sincerity, and caring about students as individuals as well as learners. The teacher displays concern and affection for students, is attentive to their needs and emotions, and socializes them to display these same characteristics in their interactions with one another.

In creating classroom displays and in developing content during lessons, the teacher connects with and builds on the students' prior knowledge and experiences, including

their home cultures. The teacher addresses diversity proactively, honoring the full range of individualities and family backgrounds represented in the class in ways that validate students' personal identities. Extending the learning community from the school to the home, the teacher establishes and maintains collaborative relationships with parents and encourages their active involvement in their children's learning.

The teacher promotes a learning orientation by introducing activities with emphasis on what students will learn from them, treating mistakes as natural parts of the learning process, and encouraging students to work collaboratively and help one another. Students are taught to ask questions without embarrassment, to contribute to lessons without fear of ridicule of their ideas, and to collaborate in pairs or small groups on many of their learning activities.

2. Opportunity to Learn *Students learn more when most of the available time is allocated to curriculum-related activities and the classroom management system emphasizes maintaining students' engagement in those activities.*

Research findings. A major determinant of students' learning in any academic domain is their degree of exposure to the domain at school through participation in lessons and learning activities. The lengths of the school day and the school year create upper limits on these opportunities to learn. Within these limits, the learning opportunities actually experienced by students depend on how much of the available time they spend participating in lessons and learning activities. Effective teachers allocate most of the available time to activities designed to accomplish instructional goals.

Research indicates that teachers who approach management as a process of establishing an effective learning environment tend to be more successful than teachers who emphasize their roles as disciplinarians. Effective teachers do not need to spend much time responding to behavior problems because they use management techniques that elicit student cooperation and engagement in activities and thus minimize the frequency of such problems. Working within the positive classroom climate implied by the principle of learning community, the teacher articulates clear expectations concerning classroom behavior in general and participation in lessons and learning activities in particular, follows through with any needed cues or reminders, and ensures that students learn procedures and routines that foster productive engagement during activities and smooth transitions between them (Brophy, 1983; Denham & Lieberman, 1980; Doyle, 1986).

In the classroom. There are more things worth learning than there is time available to teach them, so it is essential that limited classroom time be used efficiently. Effective teachers allocate most of this time to lessons and learning activities rather than to pastimes that do not support progress toward learning goals. Their students spend many more hours each year on curriculum-related activities than do students of teachers who are less focused on instructional goals.

Effective teachers convey a sense of the purposefulness of schooling and the importance of getting the most out of the available time. They begin and end lessons on time, keep transitions short, and teach their students how to get started quickly and maintain focus when working on assignments. Good planning and preparation enable them to proceed through lessons smoothly without having to stop to consult a manual or locate an item needed for display or demonstration. Their activities and assignments feature stimulating variety and optimal challenge, which helps students to sustain their task engagement and minimizes disruptions due to boredom or distraction.

Successful teachers are clear and consistent in articulating their expectations. At the beginning of the year they model or provide direct instruction in desired procedures if necessary, and subsequently they cue or remind their students when these procedures are needed. They monitor the classroom continually, which enables them to respond to

emerging problems before they become disruptive. When possible, they intervene in ways that do not disrupt lesson momentum or distract students who are working on assignments. They teach students strategies and procedures for carrying out recurring activities, such as participating in whole-class lessons, engaging in productive discourse with classmates, making smooth transitions between activities, collaborating in pairs or small groups, storing and handling equipment and personal belongings, managing learning and completing assignments on time, and knowing when and how to get help. The teachers' emphasis is not on imposing situational control but on building students' capacity for managing their own learning so that expectations are adjusted and cues, reminders, and other managerial moves are faded out as the school year progresses. These teachers do not merely maximize "time on task," but spend a great deal of time actively instructing their students during interactive lessons, in which the teachers elaborate the content for students and help them to interpret and respond to it. Their classrooms feature more time spent in interactive discourse and less time spent in independent seatwork. Most of their instruction occurs during interactive discourse with students rather than during extended lecture-presentations.

The principle of maximizing opportunity to learn is not meant to imply emphasizing broad coverage at the expense of the deep development of powerful ideas. The breadth/depth dilemma must be addressed in curriculum planning. The point of the opportunity-to-learn principle is that regardless of how the breadth/depth dilemma is addressed and whatever the resultant curriculum may be, students will make the most progress toward intended outcomes if most of the available classroom time is allocated to curriculum-related activities.

3. Curricular Alignment *All components of the curriculum are aligned to create a cohesive program for accomplishing instructional purposes and goals.*

Research findings. Research indicates that educational policymakers, textbook publishers, and teachers often become so focused on content coverage or learning activities that they lose sight of the larger purposes and goals that are supposed to guide curriculum planning. Teachers typically plan by concentrating on the content they intend to cover and the steps involved in the activities their students will do, without giving much thought to the goals or intended outcomes of the instruction. Textbook publishers, in response to pressure from special interest groups, tend to keep expanding their content coverage. As a result, too many topics are covered in insufficient depth; content exposition often lacks coherence and is cluttered with insertions; skills are taught separately from knowledge content rather than integrated with it; and in general, neither the students' texts nor the questions and activities suggested in the teachers' manuals are structured around powerful ideas connected to important goals.

Students taught using textbooks may be asked to memorize parades of disconnected facts or to practice disconnected subskills in isolation instead of learning coherent networks of connected content structured around powerful ideas. These problems are often exacerbated by externally imposed assessment programs that emphasize recognition of isolated bits of knowledge or performance of isolated subskills. Such problems can be minimized through goal-oriented curriculum development in which the overall purposes and goals of the instruction, not miscellaneous content coverage pressures or test items, guide curricular planning and decision making (Beck & McKeown, 1988; Clark & Peterson, 1986; Wang, Haertel, & Walberg, 1993).

References to attitudes, values, dispositions, and appreciations are intended to underscore the fact that instructional purposes and goals include not only knowledge and skills but also aesthetic experiences, positive attitudes toward the subject, efficacy perceptions, and other affective and motivational outcomes. Curricula should include activities that

have important personal meanings for students and induce aesthetic and dispositional experiences such as appreciating the beauty of a poem, the elegant simplicity and symmetry of mathematics, the excitement and generative power of science, or the value of privileging the common good in delineating the rights and responsibilities of citizens. The curricular alignment principle implies not only including such aesthetic and affective outcomes in the overall set of purposes and goals that guide curriculum planning, but also teaching the knowledge and skill components of the curriculum in ways that support progress toward desired attitudes, values, dispositions, and appreciations.

In the classroom. A curriculum is not an end in itself but a means, a tool for helping students to learn what is considered essential as preparation for fulfilling adult roles in society and realizing their potential as individuals. Its goals are learner outcomes—the knowledge, skills, attitudes, values, and dispositions to action that the society wishes to develop in its citizens. The goals are the reason for the existence of the curriculum so that beliefs about what is needed to accomplish them should guide each step in curriculum planning and implementation. Goals are most likely to be attained if all of the curriculum’s components (e.g., content clusters, instructional methods, learning activities, and assessment tools) are selected because they are believed to be needed as means for helping students to accomplish the overall purposes and goals. This involves planning curriculum and instruction not just to cover content but to accomplish important student outcomes—capabilities and dispositions to be developed in students and used in their lives inside and outside of school, both now and in the future. In this regard, it is important to emphasize goals of understanding, appreciation, and life application. Understanding means that students learn both the individual elements in a network of related content and the connections among them so that they can explain the content in their own words and connect it to their prior knowledge. Appreciation means that students value what they are learning because they understand that there are good reasons for learning it. Life application means that students retain their learning in a form that makes it useable when needed in other contexts.

Content developed with these goals in mind is likely to be retained as meaningful learning that is internally coherent, well connected with other meaningful learning, and accessible for application. This is most likely to occur when the content itself is structured around powerful ideas, and when the development of this content through classroom lessons and learning activities focuses on these ideas and their connections.

4. Establishing Learning Orientations Teachers can prepare students for learning by providing an initial structure to clarify intended outcomes and cue desired learning strategies.

Research findings. Research indicates the value of establishing a learning orientation by beginning lessons and activities with advance organizers or previews. These introductions facilitate students’ learning by communicating the nature and purpose of the activity, connecting it to prior knowledge, and cueing the kinds of student responses that the activity requires. This helps students to remain goal oriented and strategic as they process information and respond to the questions or tasks embodied in the activity. Good lesson orientations (in other words, beginning the lesson by explaining the lesson’s goals and how the lesson will unfold) also stimulate students’ motivation to learn by communicating enthusiasm for the learning or helping students to appreciate its value or application potential (Ausubel, 1968; Brophy, 2010; Meichenbaum & Biemiller, 1998).

In the classroom. Advance organizers tell students what they will be learning before the instruction begins. They characterize the general nature of the activity and give students a structure within which to understand and connect the specifics that will be presented by a teacher or text. Such knowledge of the nature of the activity and the

structure of the content will help students to focus on the main ideas and order their thoughts effectively. Therefore, before beginning any lesson or activity, the teacher should see that students know what they will be learning and why it is important for them to learn it.

Other ways to help students learn with a sense of purpose and direction include calling attention to the activity's goals, reviewing main ideas or major steps to be elaborated, pretests that alert students to main points to learn, and pre-questions that stimulate student thinking about the topic.

Although it always is important to identify the purposes of activities as part of introducing them in ways that support optimal student engagement, teachers sometimes might want to withhold formal statements of key ideas or detailed elaboration of learning strategies until after students have had opportunities to explore an issue or problem, communicate their ideas about it, and negotiate understandings on their own. For example, a teacher might want to use inductive, guided discovery, experiential, or problem-based approaches that initially engage students in inquiry or problem solving and only later move to negotiation and synthesis of what was learned (including "bridging" from students' natural language to more formal terminology).

5. Coherent Content *To facilitate meaningful learning and retention, content is explained clearly and developed with emphasis on its structure and connections.*

Research findings. Research indicates that networks of connected knowledge structured around powerful ideas can be learned with understanding and retained in forms that make them accessible for application. In contrast, disconnected bits of information are likely to be learned only through low-level processes such as rote memorizing, and most of these bits either are soon forgotten or are retained in ways that limit their accessibility. Similarly, skills are likely to be learned and used effectively if taught as strategies adapted to particular purposes and situations, with attention to when and how to apply them, but students may not be able to integrate and use skills that are learned only by rote and practiced only in isolation from the rest of the curriculum (Beck & McKeown, 1988; Good & Brophy, 2003; Rosenshine, 1968).

In the classroom. Whether in textbooks or in teacher-led instruction, information is easier to learn to the extent that it is coherent—the sequence of ideas or events makes sense and the relationships among them are made apparent. Content is most likely to be organized coherently when it is selected in a principled way, guided by ideas about what students should learn from studying the topic.

When making presentations, providing explanations, or giving demonstrations, effective teachers project enthusiasm for the content and organize and sequence it so as to maximize its clarity and "learner friendliness." The teacher presents new information with reference to what students already know about the topic; proceeds in small steps sequenced in ways that are easy to follow; uses pacing, gestures, and other oral communication skills to support comprehension; avoids vague or ambiguous language and digressions that disrupt continuity; elicits students' responses regularly to stimulate active learning and ensure that each step is mastered before moving to the next; finishes with a review of main points, stressing general integrative concepts; and follows up with questions or assignments that require students to encode the material in their own words and apply or extend it to new contexts.

Other ways to help students understand the networks of connected ideas in a lesson include using outlines or graphic organizers that illustrate the structure of the content, study guides that call attention to key ideas, or task organizers that help students keep track of the steps involved and the strategies they use to complete these steps.

In combination, the principles calling for curricular alignment and for coherent content imply that, to enable students to construct meaningful knowledge that they can access and use in their lives outside of school, teachers need to: (1) retreat from breadth of coverage in order to allow time to develop the most important content in greater depth; (2) represent this important content as networks of connected information structured around powerful ideas; (3) develop the content with a focus on explaining these important ideas and the connections among them; and (4) follow up with learning activities and assessment measures that feature authentic tasks that provide students with opportunities to develop and display learning that reflects the intended outcomes of the instruction.

Clear explanations of coherent content structured around powerful ideas do not always have to be transmitted from the teacher to the students at the beginnings of lessons. Often, they can be elicited from students or developed in the course of carrying out inquiry or problem-solving activities. Also, some activities do not require much content explanation because they are designed primarily to address process goals (e.g., to develop connoisseurship through discussion of artistic or literary works, or to develop desired citizenship dispositions through productive discussion of controversial issues). However, teachers should conclude inquiry, problem solving, and process learning activities with reflection on what has been learned, by providing or eliciting clear statements of key concepts and principles.

6. Thoughtful Discourse *Questions are planned to engage students in sustained discourse structured around powerful ideas.*

Research findings. Besides presenting information and modeling application of skills, effective teachers structure a great deal of content-based discourse. They use questions to stimulate students to process and reflect on the content, recognize relationships among and implications of its key ideas, think critically about it, and use it in problem solving, decision making, or other higher-order applications. Such discourse is not limited to factual review or recitation featuring rapid pacing and short answers to miscellaneous questions, but instead features sustained and thoughtful development of key ideas. Through participation in this discourse, students construct and communicate content-related ideas. In the process, they abandon naive ideas or misconceptions and adopt the more sophisticated and valid ideas embedded in the instructional goals (Good & Brophy, 2003; Newmann, 1990; Rowe, 1986).

In the classroom. In the early stages of units when new content is introduced and developed, more time is spent in interactive lessons featuring teacher-student discourse than in independent work on assignments. The teacher plans sequences of questions designed to develop the content systematically and help students to construct understandings of it by relating it to their prior knowledge and collaborating in dialogue about it.

The forms and cognitive levels of these questions need to be suited to the instructional goals. Some primarily closed-ended and factual questions might be appropriate when teachers are assessing prior knowledge or reviewing new learning, but accomplishing the most significant instructional goals requires open-ended questions that call for students to apply, analyze, synthesize, or evaluate what they are learning. Some questions have a range of possible correct answers, and some will invite discussion or debate (e.g., concerning the relative merits of alternative suggestions for solving problems).

Because questions are intended to engage students in cognitive processing and construction of knowledge, they ordinarily should be addressed to the class as a whole. This encourages all students, not just the one eventually called on, to listen carefully and respond thoughtfully to each question. After posing a question, the teacher needs

to pause to allow students enough time to process it and at least begin to formulate responses, especially if the question is complicated or requires students to engage in higher-order thinking.

Thoughtful discourse features sustained examination of a small number of related topics in which students are invited to develop explanations, make predictions, debate alternative approaches to problems, or otherwise consider the content's implications or applications. The teacher presses students to clarify or justify their assertions rather than accepting them indiscriminately. In addition to providing feedback, the teacher encourages students to explain or elaborate on their answers or to comment on classmates' answers. Frequently, discourse that begins in a question-and-answer format evolves into an exchange of views in which students respond to one another as well as to the teacher and respond to statements as well as to questions.

Teachers structure discussions by engaging students with problems that are open to different solutions or issues that allow different positions to be taken and defended. As the discourse develops, they intervene as needed to ask for clarifications, reiterate and elaborate on students' ideas, summarize progress, and move the discussion forward. In using such techniques to steer discourse in productive directions, however, teachers should do so in ways that support learning community principles, thus helping students to develop ownership over their ideas and confidence in their abilities to make sense of content and contribute to developing conversations.

Students need to develop coherent networks of knowledge structured around powerful ideas. The degree to which these understandings are transmitted by the teacher versus constructed by the students themselves will vary with the ages of the students, their prior knowledge of the topic, and other factors. Overreliance on transmission encourages learner passivity and can lead to boredom and emphasis on rote learning methods. Overreliance on inquiry or other constructivist methods can lead to lessons that stray from their intended goals or content and expose students to misconceptions rather than elegantly structured knowledge representations.

7. Practice and Application Activities *Students need sufficient opportunities to practice and apply what they are learning and to receive improvement-oriented feedback.*

Research findings. There are three main ways that teachers help their students to learn. First, they present information, explain concepts, and model skills. Second, they lead their students in review, recitation, discussion, and other forms of discourse surrounding the content. Third, they engage students in activities or assignments that provide them with opportunities to practice or apply what they are learning. Research indicates that skills practiced to a peak of smoothness and automaticity tend to be retained indefinitely, whereas skills that are mastered only partially tend to deteriorate. Most skills included in school curricula are learned best when practice is distributed across time and embedded within a variety of tasks. Thus, it is important to follow up thorough initial teaching with occasional review activities and with opportunities for students to use what they are learning in a variety of application contexts (Brophy & Alleman, 1991; Cooper, 1994; Dempster, 1991; Knapp, 1995).

In the classroom. Practice is one of the most important yet least appreciated aspects of learning in classrooms. Little or no practice may be needed for simple behaviors like pronouncing words, but practice becomes more important as learning becomes complex. Successful practice involves polishing skills that already are established at rudimentary levels to make them smoother, more efficient, and more automatic, not trying to establish such skills through trial and error.

Much practice that involves revisiting core ideas and skills can be embedded in problem-solving activities, games, or other application situations. Fill-in-the-blank

worksheets, pages of mathematical computation problems, and related tasks that engage students in memorizing facts or practicing subskills in isolation from the rest of the curriculum should be minimized. Instead, most practice should be embedded within application contexts that feature conceptual understanding of knowledge and self-regulated application of skills. Thus, most practice of reading skills is embedded within lessons involving reading and interpreting extended text, most practice of writing skills is embedded within activities calling for authentic writing, and most practice of mathematics skills is embedded within problem-solving applications.

Opportunity to learn in school can be extended through homework assignments that are realistic in length and difficulty given the students' abilities to work independently. To ensure that students know what to do, the teacher can go over the instructions and get them started in class, then have them finish the work at home. An accountability system should be in place to ensure that students complete their homework assignments, and the work should be reviewed in class the next day.

To be useful, practice must involve opportunities not only to apply skills but to receive timely feedback. Feedback should be informative rather than evaluative, helping students to assess their progress with respect to major goals and to understand and correct errors or misconceptions. At times when teachers are unable to circulate to monitor progress and provide feedback to individuals, pairs, or groups working on assignments, they should arrange for students to get feedback by consulting posted study guides or answer sheets or by asking peers designated to act as tutors or resource persons.

8 Scaffolding Students' Task Engagement *The teacher provides whatever assistance students need to enable them to engage in learning activities productively.*

Research findings. Research on learning tasks suggests that activities and assignments should be sufficiently varied and interesting to motivate student engagement, sufficiently new or challenging to constitute meaningful learning experiences rather than needless repetition, and yet sufficiently easy to allow students to achieve high rates of success if they invest reasonable time and effort. The effectiveness of assignments is enhanced when teachers first explain the work and go over practice examples with students before releasing them to work independently, then circulate to monitor progress and provide help when needed. Students will need explanation, modeling, coaching, and other forms of assistance from their teachers, but the teacher's structuring and scaffolding of students' task engagement will fade as the students' expertise develops. Eventually, students should become able to autonomously use what they are learning and regulate their own productive task engagement (Brophy & Alleman, 1991; Rosenshine & Meister, 1992; Shuell, 1996; Tharp & Gallimore, 1988).

In the classroom. Besides being well chosen, activities need to be effectively presented, monitored, and followed up if they are to have their full impact. This means preparing students for an activity in advance, providing guidance and feedback during the activity, and leading the class in post-activity reflection afterwards. In introducing activities, teachers should stress their purposes in ways that will help students to engage in them with clear ideas about the goals to be accomplished. Then they might call students' attention to relevant background knowledge, model strategies for responding to the task, or scaffold by providing information concerning how to go about completing task requirements. If reading is involved, for example, teachers might summarize the main ideas, remind students about strategies for developing and monitoring their comprehension as they read (e.g., paraphrasing, summarizing, taking notes, asking themselves questions to check understanding), distribute study guides that call attention to key ideas and structural elements, or provide task organizers that help students to keep track of the steps involved and the strategies that they are using.

Once students begin working on activities or assignments, teachers should circulate to monitor their progress and provide assistance if necessary. Assuming that students have a general understanding of what to do and how to do it, these interventions can be kept brief and confined to minimal and indirect forms of help. If teacher assistance is too direct or extensive, teachers will end up doing tasks for students instead of helping them learn to do the tasks themselves.

Teachers also need to assess performance for completion and accuracy. When performance is poor, they will need to teach the content again and provide follow-up assignments designed to ensure that content is understood and skills are mastered.

Most tasks will not have their full effects unless they are followed by reflection or debriefing activities in which the teacher reviews the task with the students, provides general feedback about performance, and reinforces main ideas as they relate to overall goals. Reflection activities should also include opportunities for students to ask follow-up questions, share task-related observations or experiences, compare opinions, or in other ways deepen their appreciation of what they have learned and how it relates to their lives outside of school.

9. Strategy Teaching *The teacher models and instructs students in learning and self-regulation strategies.*

Research findings. General learning and study skills as well as domain-specific skills (such as constructing meaning from text, solving mathematical problems, or reasoning scientifically) are most likely to be learned thoroughly and become accessible for application if they are taught as strategies to be brought to bear purposefully and implemented with metacognitive awareness and self-regulation. This requires comprehensive instruction that includes attention to propositional knowledge (what to do), procedural knowledge (how to do it), and conditional knowledge (when and why to do it). Strategy teaching is especially important for less able students who otherwise might not come to understand the value of consciously monitoring, self-regulating, and reflecting upon their learning processes (Meichenbaum & Biemiller, 1998; Pressley & Beard El-Dinary, 1993; Weinstein & Mayer, 1986).

In the classroom. Many students do not develop effective learning and problem-solving strategies on their own but can acquire them through modeling and explicit instruction from their teachers. Poor readers, for example, can be taught reading comprehension strategies such as keeping the purpose of an assignment in mind when reading, activating relevant background knowledge, identifying major points in attending to the outline and flow of content, monitoring understanding by generating and trying to answer questions about the content, or drawing and testing inferences by making interpretations, predictions, and conclusions. Instruction should include not only demonstrations of and opportunities to apply the skill itself but also explanations of the purpose of the skill (i.e., what it does for the learner) and the occasions in which it would be used.

Strategy teaching is likely to be most effective when it includes cognitive modeling: The teacher thinks out loud while modeling use of the strategy. This makes overt for learners the otherwise covert thought processes that guide use of the strategy in a variety of contexts. Cognitive modeling provides learners with first-person language (“self talk”) that they can adapt directly when using the strategy themselves. This eliminates the need for translation that is created when instruction is presented in the impersonal third-person language of explanation or even the second-person language of coaching.

In addition to strategies for use in particular domains or types of assignments, teachers can model and instruct their students in general study skills and learning strategies such as rehearsal (repeating material to remember it more effectively), elaboration (putting material into one’s own words and relating it to prior knowledge), organization

(outlining material to highlight its structure and remember it), comprehension monitoring (keeping track of the strategies used and the degree of success achieved with them, and adjusting strategies accordingly), and affect monitoring (maintaining concentration and task focus, minimizing performance anxiety and fear of failure).

When providing feedback as students work on assignments and when leading subsequent reflection activities, teachers can ask questions or make comments that help students to monitor and reflect on their learning. Such monitoring and reflection should focus not only on the content being learned, but also on the strategies that the students are using to process the content and solve problems. This will help the students to refine their strategies and regulate their learning more systematically.

Teachers' questions and cognitive modeling also can be used to support students' self-regulation of attitudinal, value, and dispositional learning, including aesthetic appreciations. With such support, students who have not already learned to do so on their own can learn to look for and experience the personal satisfactions and aesthetic pleasures of the learning experiences in which they are engaged, as well as to think about ways in which what they are learning might improve the quality of their lives outside of school or help them to accomplish personal goals.

10. Cooperative Learning *Students often benefit from working in pairs or small groups to construct understandings or help one another master skills.*

Research findings. Research indicates that much can be gained by arranging for students to collaborate in pairs or small groups as they work on activities and assignments. Cooperative learning promotes affective and social benefits such as increased student interest in and valuing of subject matter and increases in positive attitudes and social interactions among students who differ in gender, race, ethnicity, achievement levels, and other characteristics.

Cooperative learning also creates the potential for cognitive and metacognitive benefits by engaging students in discourse that requires them to make their task-related information-processing and problem-solving strategies explicit (and thus available for discussion and reflection). Students are likely to show improved achievement outcomes when they engage in certain forms of cooperative learning as an alternative to completing assignments on their own (Bennett & Dunne, 1992; Johnson & Johnson, 1994; Slavin, 1995).

In the classroom. Traditional approaches to instruction feature whole-class lessons followed by independent seatwork time during which students work alone (and usually silently) on assignments. Cooperative learning approaches retain the whole-class lessons but replace part of the individual seatwork time with opportunities for students to work together in pairs or small groups on follow-up practice and application activities. Cooperative learning can be used with activities ranging from drill and practice to learning facts and concepts, discussion, and problem solving. It is perhaps most valuable as a way to engage students in meaningful learning with authentic tasks in a social setting. Students have more chances to talk in pairs or small groups than in whole-class activities, and shy students are more likely to feel comfortable expressing ideas in these more intimate settings.

Some forms of cooperative learning call for students to help one another accomplish individual learning goals, such as by discussing how to respond to assignments, checking work, or providing feedback or tutorial assistance. Other forms of cooperative learning call for students to work together to accomplish a group goal by pooling their resources and sharing the work. For example, the group might paint a mural, assemble a collage, or prepare a research report to be presented to the rest of the class. Cooperative learning models that call for students to work together to produce a group product often feature a division of labor among group participants (e.g., to prepare a biographical report, one group member

will assume responsibility for studying the person's early life, another for the person's major accomplishments, another for the effects of these on society, and so on).

Cooperative learning in pairs or small groups should be viewed as a supplement to, not a substitute for, clarification of key concepts and principles in whole-class lessons. If students are asked to assume too much of the responsibility for managing their learning while operating independently of the teacher, they may fail to develop key ideas or develop distorted versions of them. Also, if students are asked to divide responsibilities so that each works on a separate part of a larger task, many of them may never develop a coherent grasp of the big picture.

Cooperative learning methods are most likely to enhance learning if they combine group goals with individual accountability. That is, each group member has clear objectives for which he or she will be held accountable. (Students know that any member of the group may be called on to answer any one of the group's questions or that they all will be tested individually on what they are learning.)

Activities used in cooperative learning formats should be well suited to those formats. Some activities are most naturally done by individuals working alone, others by students working in pairs, and still others by small groups of three to six students.

Students should receive whatever instruction and scaffolding they may need to prepare them for productive engagement in cooperative learning activities. For example, teachers may need to show their students how to share, listen, integrate the ideas of others, and handle disagreements constructively. During times when students are working in pairs or small groups, the teacher should circulate to monitor progress, make sure that groups are working productively on the assigned tasks, and provide any needed assistance.

11. Goal-Oriented Assessment *The teacher uses a variety of formal and informal assessment methods to monitor progress toward learning goals.*

Research findings. Well-developed curricula include strong and functional assessment components. These assessment components are aligned with the curriculum's major purposes and goals, so they are integrated with the curriculum's content, instructional methods, and learning activities, and are designed to evaluate progress toward major intended outcomes.

Comprehensive assessment does not just document students' abilities to supply acceptable answers to questions or problems; it also examines the students' reasoning and problem-solving processes. Effective teachers routinely monitor their students' progress in this fashion, using both formal tests or performance evaluations and informal assessment of students' contributions to lessons and work on assignments (Dempster, 1991; Stiggins, 1997; Wiggins, 1993).

In the classroom. Effective teachers use assessment for evaluating students' progress in learning and for planning curriculum improvements, not just for generating grades. Good assessment includes data from many sources besides paper-and-pencil tests. Its forms and content address the full range of goals or intended outcomes (knowledge and skills at a variety of levels, attitudes, values, and dispositions). Standardized, norm-referenced tests might comprise part of the assessment program. These tests are useful to the extent that what they measure is congruent with the intended outcomes of the curriculum and attention is paid to students' performance on each individual item, not just total scores. However, standardized tests ordinarily should be supplemented with publisher-supplied curriculum embedded tests (when these appear useful) and with teacher-made tests that focus on learning goals emphasized in instruction but not in external testing sources.

In addition, learning activities and sources of data other than tests should be used for assessment purposes. Everyday lessons and activities provide opportunities to monitor the progress of the class as a whole and of individual students, and tests can be augmented

with performance evaluations using tools such as laboratory tasks and observation checklists, portfolios of student papers and projects, and essays or other assignments that call for higher-order thinking and application. Finally, holistic and broad-ranged methods may be needed to assess progress toward aesthetic, affective, motivational, and other dispositional outcomes. A broad view of assessment helps to ensure that the assessment component includes authentic activities that provide students with opportunities to synthesize and reflect on what they are learning, think critically and creatively about it, and apply it in problem-solving and decision-making contexts.

In general, assessment should be treated as an ongoing and integral part of each instructional unit. Results should be scrutinized to detect weaknesses in the assessment practices themselves; to identify learner needs, misunderstandings, or misconceptions that may need attention; and to suggest potential adjustments in curriculum goals, instructional materials, or teaching plans.

12. Achievement Expectations *The teacher establishes and follows through on appropriate expectations for learning outcomes.*

Research findings. Research indicates that effective schools feature strong academic leadership that produces consensus on goal priorities and commitment to instructional excellence as well as positive teacher attitudes toward students and expectations regarding their abilities to master the curriculum. Teacher-effects research indicates that teachers who elicit strong achievement gains accept responsibility for doing so. They believe that their students are capable of learning and that they (the teachers) are capable of, and responsible for, teaching them successfully. If students do not learn something the first time, they teach it again, and if the regular curriculum materials do not do the job, they find or develop others that will (Brophy, 2010; Creemers & Scheerens, 1989; Good & Brophy, 2003; Shuell, 1996; Teddlie & Stringfield, 1993).

In the classroom. Teachers' expectations concerning what their students are capable of accomplishing (with teacher help) tend to shape both what teachers attempt to elicit from their students and what the students come to expect from themselves. Thus, teachers should form and project expectations that are as positive as they can be while still remaining realistic. Such expectations should represent genuine beliefs about what can be achieved and therefore should be taken seriously as goals toward which to work in instructing students.

It is helpful if teachers set goals for the class and for individuals in terms of floors (minimally acceptable standards), not ceilings. Then they can let group progress rates, rather than limits adopted arbitrarily in advance, determine how far the class can go within the time available. They can keep their expectations for individual students current by monitoring their progress closely and by stressing current performance over past history.

At minimum, teachers should expect all of their students to progress sufficiently to enable them to perform satisfactorily at the next level. This implies holding students accountable for participating in lessons and learning activities and turning in careful and completed work on assignments. It also implies that struggling students will receive the time, instruction, and encouragement needed to enable them to meet expectations.

When individualizing instruction and giving students feedback, teachers can emphasize the students' continuous progress relative to previous levels of mastery rather than how they compare with other students or with standardized test norms. Instead of merely evaluating relative levels of success, teachers can diagnose learning difficulties and provide students with whatever feedback or additional instruction they need to enable them to meet the goals. If students have not understood an explanation or demonstration, the teacher can follow through by teaching it again—if necessary, in a different way rather than by merely repeating the original instruction.

In general, teachers are likely to be most successful when they think in terms of stretching students' minds by stimulating them and encouraging them to achieve as much as they can, not in terms of "protecting" them from failure or embarrassment.

Summary

Many of the principles for powerful social studies teaching emphasized in this text are social studies adaptations of more generic principles for teaching school subjects for understanding, appreciation, and life application. It has been challenging for American teachers to apply these principles in recent decades because of the mile-wide but inch-deep problem with the textbooks as well as their failure to structure the content or the suggested learning activities around big ideas. Teaching for understanding, appreciation, and life application has become even more difficult recently because of pressures associated with high-stakes testing, primarily in literacy and mathematics. If you teach in states or districts where these pressures are particularly intense, you may have to make at least temporary compromises between doing what you view as best for your students and doing what appears

necessary to prepare them for the tests. Some potential strategies for accomplishing this were suggested and illustrated early in the chapter.

The rest of the chapter presented and briefly elaborated on a list of 12 generic principles of good teaching distilled from the large body of research literature on the topic. Because so much of what is suggested in this text relates to these 12 principles, we have presented them at the end of the text as a way to synthesize much of its content. Both now and in the future, if you find yourself "losing the forest for the trees" as you learn more and more about the details of implementing particular teaching strategies or learning activities, you should find it helpful to revisit these principles as a way to reconnect with the big picture. Remember, powerful teaching and learning depends on you.

Reflective Questions

1. Imagine that the principal of your school indicates that you have to follow a very "set" curriculum and underscores the importance of following pacing guides including prescribed teaching strategies. How will you respond, given what you have just read?
2. Which of the 12 principles of powerful teaching do you think will be easiest to implement and why? Most difficult to implement and why?
3. What resources will you draw upon to implement the principles you find difficult?
3. Select one of the 12 principles—probably the one that will be most easily implemented throughout the core subjects. How will you incorporate this into your planning? What sorts of notes will you include in your daily or weekly plans to insure you are consistent in implementing the principle—and develop "habits" of good practice?



TeachSource Video Case

Go to the Education Media Library at www.cengagebrain.com to view the TeachSource Video Case *Teaching as a Profession: What Defines Effective Teaching?* This video shows a range of examples of effective teaching. As you watch, consider the following questions: How do these examples reflect some of the 12 principles? What teaching practices do you want to use in your own teaching?

Your Turn: Putting the 12 Principles into Practice

Assuming that you are convinced that teaching is a scholarly activity, think about what you will do to insure that this is evident in your classroom. Design a plan—and use as a self-monitoring tool. Your plan might include a description of how you will make sure you practice the 12 principles in authentic ways, a list of who you will invite into your classroom to observe your teaching and take a look at one or

more of the principles in action, and so forth. Share your ideas with your field instructor or school principal.

Imagine that you have the opportunity to initiate a conversation with your classroom mentor or school principal regarding the importance of scholarly teaching, especially in this age of accountability. Create an outline of what you would include in that discussion.

TABLE 14.1 THE 12 PRINCIPLES OF GOOD TEACHING

Principle/ Related Chapter	Explanation	What it Looks Like up Close: A Snapshot	Examples of Enactment
1. Supportive Classroom Climate Chapter 2	Students learn best within cohesive caring communities.	The class discusses what caring entails—how it looks and what actions and words are appropriate. Individuals and groups have responsibilities. Each student has a peer “buddy” (partner). Peer partners read and respond to each other’s work, collaborate on class projects, eat lunch together, play together at recess, read together, and so on. The teacher frequently changes pairings, and the pairings are sometimes comprised of children of the same gender, race, and so forth, and other times mixed.	This week the class received a new student. The newcomer rides the city bus to the school from the shelter where he currently lives with his mother. When he arrives at his classroom he is immediately embraced by his peers. The “welcoming committee” assumes responsibility for 10 minutes of singing and playing a game they use when new friends arrive. A peer partner assures the most recent member of the community that he’d help him learn a lot about the classroom very quickly, eat lunch with him, and so on. After three days, the newcomer shook the teacher’s hand—a daily practice implemented to insure a connection with every child, every day. The newcomer beaming from ear to ear was heard saying, “I love this place.”
2. Opportunity to Learn Chapter 11 Chapter 13	Students learn more when most of the available time is allocated to curriculum-related activities and the classroom management system emphasizes maintaining students’ engagement in those activities.	The teacher conveys a sense of purposefulness of schooling and the importance of getting the most out of every minute. At the beginning of the year, the teacher provides direct instruction (supplemented with student input) for desired routines and reminds students when the routines are needed—or need to be revisited. The teacher insists on practicing routines until they are internalized. To be successful, the teacher must be consistent and expect routines be followed regularly.	Within three minutes after the bell rings students have assembled. They have taken care of their outerwear, participated in lunch count, placed their nightly folders in the proper basket, and are engaging in their morning seatwork that consists of an open ended question (often with props) related to the day’s social studies or science lesson. Today’s question for the Land To Hand Lesson is “What are the processes this banana had to go through to get to Brian’s lunch box?” Almost no time is spent on transitions.
3. Curriculum Alignment Chapter 4 Chapter 12	All components of the curriculum are aligned to create a cohesive program for accomplishing instructional purposes and goals.	Students appreciate the value of what they are learning by focusing on the big ideas and their applications. There is alignment among what is taught, what is assessed, and what has value and meaning in the world beyond school. Students are interested in applying the content to their lives.	This week the students are learning about clothing. In this lesson the students are figuring out what is entailed in making a cotton shirt. During the class discussion, the teacher says, “Of course you want to learn about this! It’s part of your life. Now, you know what it takes to make a shirt beginning with a cotton plant. Do you think you could describe to a friend what’s involved in making a pair of jeans?”

TABLE 14.1 CONTINUED

Principle/ Related Chapter	Explanation	What it Looks Like up Close: A Snapshot	Examples of Enactment
			In another scenario, the students are learning about the powerful idea that in democracies, citizens chose their leaders through voting. In this lesson the students are learning the difference between the popular vote and the electoral college. The teacher shows a graph that displays each state and its respective number of electoral votes. For an assessment, students are assigned a state, and from the graph they determine how many electoral votes the state has and then hypothesize the relative importance of that state in national elections. This assessment is aligned with the lesson's big idea, the instruction, and with students' lives beyond school.
4. <i>Establishing Learning Orientations</i> Chapter 3	The teacher can prepare students for learning by providing an initial structure to clarify the intended outcome and cue desired learning strategies.	The teacher shares with the students what they will be learning before instruction begins. The teacher may even write the goals on the board or whiteboard for easy and frequent referral throughout the lesson.	On this day the teacher sets the stage for the importance of government by talking about all the ways government influences our lives. He explains that government serves to protect us and provide services that people can't afford on their own. He gives examples. Then he says, "I am going to share with you a digital story of how government impacts my life on a daily basis. Watch carefully. See how many ways government connects to my life. After the story, I want you to share your observations. We will talk about them tomorrow along with your opinions about government involvement—and the tradeoffs."
5. <i>Coherent Content</i> Chapter 5 Chapter 6 Chapter 7 Chapter 12	To facilitate meaningful learning and retention, content is clearly explained and developed with emphasis on its structure and connections.	When using textbooks or during teacher directed instruction or guided discussion, information is easier to learn and make sense of when the content is coherent. The ideas and events make sense when relationships among them are made clear.	<p>The students are reviewing some of the main ideas they have learned about life long ago. The teacher refers to objects and events depicted on the co-constructed timeline and she underscores the students' ideas by adding, "...people were living in caves long, long ago. They didn't need clothes because they lived in warmer places and they had more hair on their bodies. But as people started to move to places that were cooler and we started to get shorter hair on our bodies we needed ways to protect ourselves. One of the things that we were already doing for food was hunting—animals such as buffalo and deer. So we took what we knew about those animals and started using their skin to make clothing." (Brophy, Alleman, & Knighton, 2010, p. 75).</p> <p>In another scenario, students are studying the causes of the American Revolution. Whereas some curricula and textbooks focus on all the major events leading up to the Revolution, this teacher selects a few events to study in depth, using primary and secondary sources such as writings, speeches, and maps. For example, in</p>

(continued)

TABLE 14.1 CONTINUED

Principle/ Related Chapter	Explanation	What it Looks Like up Close: A Snapshot	Examples of Enactment
			this lesson, students study the events of March 5, 1770 in Boston (known as the Boston Massacre). Students study various accounts of what happened and discuss why the colonists labeled it a massacre. They use this lesson as a springboard for discussion about the concepts of independence and revolution.
6. <i>Thoughtful Discourse</i> Chapter 8	Questions are planned to engage students in sustained discourse structured around powerful ideas.	In the early stages of units when new content is introduced and developed, more time is spent on interactive lessons featuring teacher-student discourse than on independent work. The teacher plans sequences of lessons designed to develop content systematically and help students relate it to prior knowledge.	<p>When introducing a Land to Hand relationship using the story of the banana as part of an integrated unit on food, the teacher uses the globe as a tool for reasoning about suitable climates for growing bananas. She traces the Equator around the globe describing it as an imaginary line around the middle of the earth. The lesson continues as follows:</p> <p>T: That's where it's warmest on the earth. So when you look at this globe if you get closer to this line you get....</p> <p>Ss: Hotter.</p> <p>T: Or warmer. If you go farther away, it gets....</p> <p>Ss: Cooler.</p> <p>T: Right. So look at Michigan. Here we are up here. Are we close to the line or far away from the line?</p> <p>Ss: Far away.</p> <p>T: So do you think this is a place where it's going to get hot enough for bananas to grow?</p> <p>Ss: No.</p> <p>T: [Goes to show places in Central America where bananas are from] (Brophy, Alleman, & Knighton, 2009, p. 186).</p> <p>Subsequent questions include Why not? Why do you think bananas can grow in Central America? How is the climate there different than Michigan's?</p> <p>In another scenario, the students are studying the role of citizens in influencing public policy. In this lesson, students engage in a discussion of a public issue of importance to them: should children be allowed to bring toys to school? With the students' help, the teacher sets up ground rules for discussion. She then models how to take a position and back it up with evidence: "I think that toys should not be allowed at school because sometimes the toys interfere with learning." In small groups, students then participate in discussion about their opinions, backed with evidence and/or reasoning. The teacher circulates among the students, helping them develop appropriate language to use to engage in substantive conversation.</p>

TABLE 14.1 CONTINUED

Principle/ Related Chapter	Explanation	What it Looks Like up Close: A Snapshot	Examples of Enactment
7. <i>Practice and Application Activities</i> Chapter 2 Chapter 11	Students need sufficient opportunities to practice and apply what they are learning and receive improvement oriented feedback.	Practice becomes more important as learning becomes more complex. Most practice should be embedded within application contexts that feature conceptual understanding of knowledge and application of skills. Practice and application can be extended through homework assignments that are authentic and realistic in length and difficulty.	The lesson focuses on the factors that contribute to decision making associated with food. The teacher uses a small portion of instructional time to model the home assignment asking students to locate a box of cereal in the cupboard and ask the family shopper why that particular kind was purchased (brand, coupon, nutritional value, cost, personal preference, and so on). The teacher helps the students envision having this conversation with the family member. The teacher emphasizes the importance of completing the assignment and bringing the data to class so that a graph can be made that illustrating the basis for family decision making about cereals.
8. <i>Scaffolding Students' Task Engagement</i> Chapter 11	The teacher provides whatever assistance students need to enable them to engage in learning activities productively.	Besides selecting activities that match the goals, the activities should be at the appropriate level of difficulty, cost effective, and feasible. Activities need to be effectively presented, modeled, monitored, and followed up if they are to have full impact on the learning.	<p>As part of their money unit (part of a larger study on market economy) students have decided to raise money for a field trip by having a bake sale. On this day, the teacher is preparing the class to develop an advertisement for the upcoming sale, using principles of good communication learned in a previous unit. After establishing that the announcement would be intended to advertise the bake sale to students and their parents, she uses questioning to scaffold thinking about other information that might be included:</p> <p>T: Why do we want to tell the kids about the bake sale? S: So they come. T: So they come and bring...? S: Money. T: Right, they need to raise enough money to pay for the field trip. Here's the next thing. What do we want to tell them? S: That there's going to be a bake sale. T: Thad, what else do we have to tell them? S: To get some money. T: To bring some money. What else, Heidi?...If I said to you, "Heidi, Miss R.'s room is having a bake sale. Bring some money, "what are you going to ask me? S: Why? T: Sure, you've got to tell them why. Why are they having a bake sale? Everybody tell me. S: For a field trip. T: OK, what else should we tell them?... "Hey, Shane, there's a bake sale. Bring some money." Don't you want to know...? S: When?</p>

(continued)

TABLE 14.1 CONTINUED

Principle/ Related Chapter	Explanation	What it Looks Like up Close: A Snapshot	Examples of Enactment
			<p>T: You want to know when to bring your money. We need to tell them when it is, right?</p> <p>S: And where it is.</p> <p>S: And how much it is.</p> <p>(Brophy, Alleman, & Knighton, 2009, p. 191).</p> <p>Subsequent questions include: What else might you include in the advertisement? Why? What advertising techniques might you use (e.g., bandwagon, testimonial, and so forth)?</p>
9. <i>Strategy Teaching</i> Chapter 10	The teacher models and instructs students in learning and self-regulation strategies.	Many students are unable to develop effective learning and problem solving on their own, however, they can acquire them through modeling and explicit direction from the teacher. Instruction includes demonstration and opportunities to apply the skills. Explanations of purpose for the skill and how the skills will be used are helpful and effective.	<p>After teaching about food groups and balanced meals, the teacher leads her students through analyses of the food groups included in representative meals from the United States, Mexico, and China. She begins with the U.S. meal because it is the most familiar and allows her students to apply what they are learning within a familiar context. She asks questions that lead them to determine whether the meal of Salisbury steak, potatoes, and corn contains something from the milk group. When the students answer no, she says "So I probably better have a nice big glass of milk with my meal." Later she asks if the meal includes representatives from the fruit group, again yielding a negative response. This time she says, "I only need to have two or three fruits a day. Maybe I had a glass of orange juice for breakfast and an apple with my lunch, so I already had my two fruits for today. So there's my meal." After modeling task-relevant reasoning in this fashion as she led her students through the analysis of the U.S. meal, the teacher then shifts from primarily modeling to primarily attempting to elicit such reasoning from the students themselves as she leads them through analyses of the Mexican and Chinese meals. Finally, the day's home assignment called for students to assess (and share with their families) the nutritional content of their meals that day.</p> <p>In other lessons in the food unit, the teacher models reading the labels on food packages to get information about their ingredients that would allow her to draw influences about the probable healthfulness of the food. She then models application of this information when making decisions about snacks, and so forth (Brophy, Alleman, & Knighton, 2009, p. 185).</p>

TABLE 14.1 CONTINUED

Principle/ Related Chapter	Explanation	What it Looks Like up Close: A Snapshot	Examples of Enactment
10. Co-operative Learning Chapter 2	Students often benefit from working in pairs or small groups to construct understanding or help one another master skills.	Sometimes co-operation learning calls for students to help one another accomplish individual learning goals. Other times students work together to accomplish a group goal by pooling their resources and sharing the work.	Students are involved in a transportation unit and the teacher assigns an essay focusing on the impact of road construction on just in time delivery services so necessary in the manufacturing world. The teacher explains that like with other journal entries and essays, he expects students to do this individually. He stresses, however, the value of first brainstorming in small groups. At the end of the allotted period, students appear eager and waste no time in starting writing. The high level of student engagement and confidence was obvious.
11. Goal-oriented Assessment Chapter 3 Chapter 9	The teacher uses a variety of formal and informal assessment methods to monitor progress toward learning goals.	Effective teachers use multiple forms of assessments for determining student progress and for planning instructional improvements. The best assessments align with the instructional practices used.	The laboratory performance assessment model is being implemented. The teacher considers this an excellent fit for the community unit. Displays of maps, local bus passes, photographs and products illustrating goods and services found in the community, local advertisements, local government documents, a community newspaper, and so forth are among the artifacts found at the various stations. Students are familiar with all of these materials used during formal instruction. Now, they are having that opportunity to individually manipulate the materials and respond to the questions that accompany them. Bloom's taxonomy was clearly used for designing the questions.
12. Achievement Expectations Chapter 2	The teacher establishes and follows through on appropriate expectations for learning outcomes.	At minimum, the teacher expects all students to progress sufficiently to enable them to perform satisfactorily at the next level. Students are held accountable for participating in lessons, learning activities, and completing all of the assignments.	During a transportation lesson, the teacher models self-talk regarding thinking and reasoning with the expectations that all students will be able to provide responses. "Talk in your head. You can think of lots of ways to move things on land." "Your last job is to tell me something that people have done to make transportation easier. Give me a thumbs-up when you have an idea ready. Be thinking about more than one idea, because someone else might think of the same idea and say it before you do." If a student is unable to respond now, but might be able to develop a response if given extra thinking time, the teacher may say that she is going to move on but will come back to the student when he or she has an idea ready. She even socializes her students to ask for extra thinking time in these situations. (Brophy, Alleman, & Knighton, 2010, p. 109).



PLANNING TOOL

This textbook is intended to impart understanding and appreciation for the most salient elements of a strong social studies curriculum. The authors have selected government as the example unit. Several of the chapter topics will be illustrated by using government-related examples. The planning tool is intended to reveal the steps in developing a meaningful unit that leads toward memorable learning with an eye toward high student achievement. We intend for this planning tool to serve as a model for how you would construct your own unit.

We deliberately set the tool apart from the text in this appendix to provide a cohesive description of how a goals-oriented approach built around big ideas drives meaningful practice. The thematic example is intended to illustrate how the various curricular elements described throughout the text are woven together linking theory to daily practice.

CHAPTER 2: HOW CAN I BUILD A LEARNING COMMUNITY IN MY CLASSROOM? *Strategies for Including All Children*

Think about the students in your classroom in terms of their socioeconomic status, their cultural and linguistic backgrounds, and their parents' employment status and legal status as citizens. You should make sure your unit is sensitive to the political and economic realities of the students' lives (e.g., not everyone is a legal resident of the U.S., and may be familiar with a very different type of government, social norms, etc.; not everyone pays the same amount of taxes, and so forth). Consider public

issues that may affect the community of the school. What role does (or could) the government play in one or more of these issues?

CHAPTER 3: HOW DO I SELECT POWERFUL GOALS AND POWERFUL CONTENT?

Sample Unit Goals: To help students to develop understanding and appreciation for government as a cultural universal; to help students develop understanding that government, supported by citizens, is required to maintain order and safety in communities and to provide goods and services for the common good.

Sample Lesson Goal: To help students understand and appreciate (1) the value of government services; and (2) how the funding of these services is supported (taxes).

The focus for this lesson (or series of lessons, depending on the age level and the amount of depth you want to develop) is on functions and services provided by governments to local communities, individual states, and all citizens of the United States. Governments are needed to do things that people cannot do by themselves.

Main Ideas to Develop

- *Government services are needed to do things that the people cannot do by themselves.*
- *All governments in the United States (e.g., community, township, city, state, and federal) provide some services for people.*
- *To pay for the services, the governments collect money from the people. The money is referred to as taxes.*

CHAPTER 4: WHAT SOCIAL STUDIES PLANNING TOOLS ARE AVAILABLE?

NCSS Curriculum Standards: Themes that relate to the unit:

VI. Power, Authority, and Governance: The study of how people create and change structures of power, authority, and governance.

VII. Production, Distribution, and Consumption: The study of how people organize for the production, distribution, and consumption of goods and services. Consider making a concept web with government at the center, with concepts related to government.

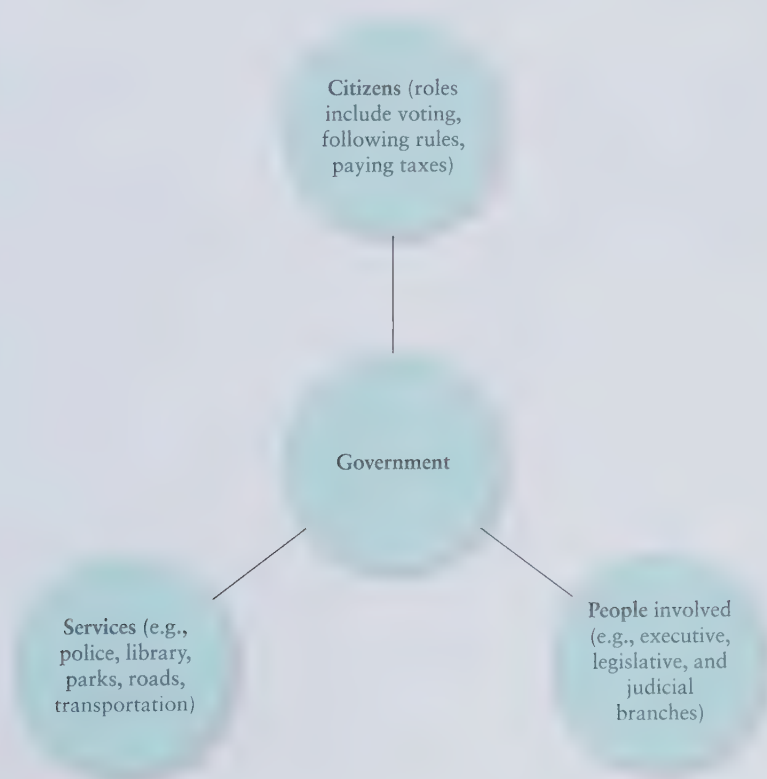
CHAPTER 7: HOW CAN I TEACH THE OTHER SOCIAL SCIENCES POWERFULLY?

Content is drawn from political science (the study of how people create and change structures of power, authority, and governance) and economics (the study of how people organize the production, distribution,

and consumption of goods and services) for this lesson. Government at all levels serves as the power/authority structure for determining the services needed in a given community that individuals/families cannot pay for themselves. The government figures out how these services will be provided and how much they will cost the taxpayers. Often times, people are asked to vote on issues related to taxes. The economics aspects of the lesson relate to the consumption of services—in this case services the government provides, using the individual tax dollars to pay for them.

CHAPTER 8: HOW CAN I USE DISCOURSE POWERFULLY?

For this lesson, we recommend using interactive narrative. Its main function is to gather, review, and connect information from previous lessons and to expand on ideas students bring up by using the artifacts, charts, and pictures from previous lessons and input students have acquired from their families about governmental services and the taxes they pay to support them.



Begin by reviewing responses to the home assignment. Diversity within the classroom will be revealed through the range of family responses. The responses will contribute to students’ expanded understanding of the big ideas. Then introduce the new lesson with a role play or skit depicting a family member paying taxes to the government (See Chapter 7).

After the debriefing of the role play, use a graphic to show where the money goes. Create a data retrieval chart to organize the information gleaned about taxes and services.

Use the following as an interactive narrative/class discussion focusing on the big ideas.

Suggested Lesson Discussion

Every community provides certain kinds of services. Think about some of the services you and your family depend on every day. You need good streets to walk or ride on to school. You need police officers and fire-fighters to protect you and help you in times of emergency. You need teachers to help you learn in school. You need the garbage collector to pick up your trash so that your community will be clean. You may get your water from a water company run by your community. Your community has traffic lights and traffic signs to help people travel safely. These are all services provided by the community.

Different communities have different needs, so the services they provide might be different too. Location may make a difference in the services that a community provides. For example, clearing the streets after a snowstorm is an important service in northern communities, but snow removal is not needed in Orlando, Florida. The size of the community also makes a difference. Large communities need more services than small communities. For example, most communities don’t have a subway system like New York or Chicago because they don’t have enough people to support it. Instead, most people drive to work. Some services are common to all communities (e.g., teachers, police officers, firefighters). Larger communities need more workers to provide more services.

Communities need money to provide the services that people need and pay the workers who provide them. Schools need money to pay for teachers, building repairs, heating, electricity, buses, and drivers. Firefighters and police officers need to be paid and their vehicles need to be maintained. Parks have to be taken care of and roads need to be

maintained. Everyone in the community helps pay for them.

Every level of government in the United States provides some services. The state government handles matters that affect all of the people who live in the state, and the federal government handles matters that affect all of the people who live in the United States. To pay for these services, people pay taxes. We all pay because we all are helped by these services.

CHAPTER 9: HOW CAN I ASSESS STUDENT LEARNING?

Ask each student to complete an open-ended statement and illustrate it with a picture. For example:

It is important that our families pay taxes to our government because _____

If upper-grade students are available, they could assist in this writing assignment as buddies. Compile the responses into a class booklet and title it “Why Our Families Pay Taxes to the Government.” Duplicate. Have each student take a copy home to share with family members.

CHAPTER 10: WHAT ARE SOME OTHER STRATEGIES FOR TEACHING SOCIAL STUDIES?

Role play can be a very useful strategy for introducing a new lesson because it is engaging and because if the teacher orchestrates it carefully, it can set the stage for the big ideas that will be introduced and developed.

The scene is, Mom, Dad, or another adult family member at the table paying bills including checks to local, state, and federal government for taxes. The individual paying the taxes is grumbling a bit and a child observing this activity asks such questions as: “Who gets the money? Why do you have to pay the money? How is the money used? Why can’t the family simply keep the money?” You as the teacher provide a brief overview of the lesson by introducing the big ideas as they respond to the questions posed by the child.

After the class debriefing, use a graphic to show where the money goes and to underscore that tax money pays for the services that families cannot afford individually. Also, different communities have different needs, so the services that they provide may be different too.

CHAPTER 11: HOW CAN I DESIGN, IMPLEMENT, AND EVALUATE INSTRUCTIONAL ACTIVITIES?

Provide each table of students with illustrations or photographs depicting community services. These might include: traffic lights, good streets, police officers, firefighters, teachers, city librarians, postal workers, and so forth. Also provide each table with a description of a community (rural, large city in winter, suburb in summer, and so forth). Using large sheets of white paper, crayons, paste, and so forth, have each group create a mural illustrating the services that the government provides based on the needs of a particular kind of community. Have each group write a short summary that includes how the government pays for the services. Share the results.

CHAPTER 12: WHAT IS THE ROLE OF CURRICULAR INTEGRATION?

The literature sources selected for this lesson are supplemental but intended to match the goals and expand on the big ideas. They should be placed in the social studies corner and available during literacy choice time and for home sign-out.

Examples of sources for this lesson include:

Killoran, J., Zimmer, J., & Jarrett, M. (1997). *Michigan and its people*. Ronkonkoma, NY: Jarrett Publishing.

(Note: Look for similar sources focusing on your state.)

Marsh, C. (1998). *Michigan government for kids*. Peach Tree City, GA: Gallopade Publishing. (Note: Look for similar sources focusing on your state.)

Sobel, S. (1999). *How the U.S. government works*. Hauppauge, NY: Barton's Educational Series.

*Make sure the literature sources you select are authentic and accurate.

CHAPTER 13: HOW CAN THE CURRICULUM BE EXPANDED AND MADE MORE POWERFUL THROUGH HOMEWORK?

Home Assignment

Encourage each student to read the class booklet entitled "Why Our Families Pay Taxes to the Government" to family members. Discuss work roles of people who work for the government, noting especially family and friends. Discuss what they do to help members of the community. Interviewing people who work for the government would be very beneficial.

Who do we know who works for the government to provide services to the community? State? Nation?	What does this person do to help members of our community?

Dear Families,

We have been learning about the functions and services provided by the government. We encourage you to ask your child to share the class booklet entitled "Why Our Families Pay Taxes to the Government." Then, identify people you know who work for the government. If possible, interview them. Discuss the kinds of services they provide to the community. Please send your response back to school so that we can include it in our next class discussion.

Sincerely,

FIGURE A.1 Proposed Planning Checklist

We encourage you to use the following checklist as a self-monitoring tool as you engage in planning. If you can answer “yes” to all of the questions, we think you are well on your way to developing a powerful social studies program in your classroom.

- _____ Do I have adequate data about my students that can inform my content and process plans?
- _____ Is there evidence in my long-range plans that I am seriously considering what an ideal social studies learner will look like at the end of the school year?
- _____ Do my long-range plans show evidence of using skills and formats from standardized tests in natural ways?
- _____ Do my long-range plans show evidence of incorporating designated content standards in meaningful ways?
- _____ Do my long-range plans show evidence of integrating across subjects in natural ways?
- _____ Do my long-range plans show evidence of a thoughtful pattern of introducing new content, skills, places for practicing them, and places for applying them in new situations?
- _____ Do my long-range plans show evidence of integrating across subjects in natural ways?
- _____ Do my long-range plans show evidence of my strategic decisions for using large-group, small-group, and individual instruction, realizing that all students are assessed individually?
- _____ Do my long-range plans reflect the primary purpose of social studies: to help young people develop the ability to make informed and reasoned decisions for the public good as citizens of a culturally diverse, democratic society in an interdependent world?
- _____ Have I made a list of yearlong social studies goals that support the overall social studies aim?

Unit Planning

- _____ Are all the curriculum components aligned (e.g., content clusters, instructional activities, assessment tools, and home assignments?)
- _____ Do my units include goals that focus on understanding, appreciation, and application?
- _____ Do my goals align with the big ideas drawn from selected content needed to guide my planning, teaching, and evaluating?
- _____ Does each unit build on the preceding ones so that there is a continuous revisiting and applying of big ideas?

Weekly and Daily Planning

- _____ Do I focus on the goals and big ideas in every lesson?
- _____ Are my daily priorities focused on coherent content linking prior knowledge to new material and scaffolding students’ task engagement?
- _____ Are my activities and assignments sufficiently varied and interesting enough to motivate student engagement?
- _____ Are my activities and assignments sufficiently new and challenging enough to constitute learning experiences rather than pointless repetition and yet easy enough to allow students to achieve high rates of success if they invest reasonable time and effort?

A RESOURCE UNIT FOR UPPER ELEMENTARY U.S. HISTORY: THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

Resource units are very useful for developing teaching units. They describe the intellectual substance, learning goals, and big ideas that can inform the teaching units. They also suggest possible activities for the teaching units, readings for teachers to use in developing the teaching units, and related readings for children to use in the teaching units. Although conceived as part of a chronologically organized introduction to U.S. history for fifth graders, this unit is designed to focus on a connected set of key ideas developed in depth rather than to offer broad coverage of the details of the revolutionary period. In support of the citizen education goals of social studies, it concentrates on the conflicts over governance issues that developed between England and the colonies, and the ways in which the colonists' views on these issues shaped the ideas expressed in the Declaration of Independence and the forms of government established through the Articles of Confederation and the U.S. Constitution. Many of these ideas about government are relatively abstract and new to fifth graders, so unit plans concentrate on developing appreciation of the ideas themselves without getting into the history or philosophy that led up to those ideas. Nor do the unit plans call for detailed study of the war itself, because we do not view this content as central to our major goals. However, teachers who wish to incorporate material on the war (because it is highly interesting to many students) can easily do so.

GOALS

- *Help students come to understand the conflicts that developed between England and the 13 colonies, how these led to the Declaration of Independence,*

how independence was secured through the Revolutionary War, and how all this resulted in the establishment of a new nation (federation).

- *Help students come to appreciate the political values and governmental ideals that emerged during this crucial period as keystones of American political traditions, as expressed in the Declaration of Independence, the Articles of Confederation, and the Constitution.*

KEY IDEAS

Recommendations about key ideas to emphasize have been informed by the findings of McKeown and Beck (1990) and VanSledright, Brophy, and Bredin (1993) concerning the prior knowledge that needs to be in place and the primary storylines that need to be developed to enable students to construct coherent understandings of the nature and implications of the American Revolution. Suggestions about key historical events to emphasize in this unit were taken from Crabtree, Nash, Gagnon, and Waugh (1992) and McBee, Tate, and Wagner (1985).

The Colonies' Relationship to England Prior to 1763

Either in previous units or in the introduction to this unit, students will need to understand the following key ideas as context for their learning about the American Revolution:

1. More than 150 years elapsed between the founding of the first English colonies at Jamestown and Plymouth and the Declaration of Independence on July 4, 1776. During that time, the English colonies

in America grew from a few isolated settlements to 13 large and populous collections of communities that became the original 13 states. Also, ties with England gradually weakened as the colonists developed identities as Americans.

2. Although they were located in America, the colonies were governed by England through governors and other officials appointed by the king.
3. Colonists were considered British subjects, so they enjoyed British protection but also were governed by British laws. They elected their own leaders and made some of their own laws at the local community level, but unlike British citizens living in England, they did not vote in Parliamentary elections. Thus, they were unable to send representatives to Parliament to specifically represent their interests. Yet, they were subject to British laws and regulations.
4. Like other colonial powers of the time (most notably France, Spain, and the Netherlands), England had built up an empire by claiming lands in other parts of the world, defending them militarily, and sending people to colonize and govern them. Colonies served as sources of raw materials for the mother country's factories as well as markets for its manufactured exports.
5. Through a system of laws and taxes, England pressured the colonies to trade only with or through England. The colonists were supposed to buy things only from England (even if they could get them cheaper from somewhere else) and sell their crops or raw materials only to England (even though they might have sold them elsewhere perhaps at greater profit).

Tensions Build After 1763

1. England fought wars against France and other European nations that competed with them in their efforts to build empires around the world. British conflict with the French over land in North America (what we call the French and Indian War or the Seven Years' War) was part of this competition. Between 1740 and 1763, the British were too busy fighting these wars to enforce their economic restrictions on the colonies, and colonists began to trade more freely than the British wanted them to.
2. However, the Treaty of Paris in 1763 established peace for awhile, so England began to pay closer attention to the colonies. It also needed money to pay off war debts, including debts accumulated fighting the French and their Indian allies in North America. Between 1763 and 1770, England

imposed a series of taxes on the colonies, viewing this as a way to get the colonists to pay a reasonable share of the war debts. (After all, British-paid soldiers had fought the French and Indian War partly on their behalf and were continuing to protect their borders.) However, the colonists resented these taxes, not only because of the financial burden but because they were imposed by a Parliament in which they were not represented. This was expressed in the phrase "no taxation without representation," which became a rallying cry against British policies. The British position was that members of Parliament represented not just the people who voted them into office but all British citizens everywhere, including in the colonies, but many American colonists did not accept this

3. Besides imposing taxes, the British did several other things that angered the colonists: trying colonists accused of certain crimes in British courts (thus depriving them of the right to a trial by a jury of their peers), forbidding them to settle west of the Appalachian Mountains (in an attempt to keep the colonists separated from the Indians, and thus to reduce the need for soldiers to prevent frontier conflicts), forbidding them to print their own money, and where necessary, requiring them to provide living quarters for British troops.

Resistance and Punishment, 1770–1774

1. Anger and political protests built up as the British kept imposing new taxes and restrictions, sometimes leading to attacks on tax collectors or other government officials. Tensions were greatest in Boston, where England sent troops in 1768 to protect government officials. Local citizens sometimes harassed the troops by yelling and throwing things at them. One such incident in 1770 got out of hand and became known (to the colonists) as the "Boston Massacre."
2. Following the Boston Massacre, England sought to reduce tensions by removing the troops to an island in Boston Harbor and by repealing all taxes except the tax on tea. Much of the anger dissipated and things settled down between 1770 and 1772.
3. However, the tea tax stood as a symbol of imposed British restrictions, and many colonists continued to oppose the notion of taxation without representation. Tensions flared up again in 1773 when the British East India Company was given a monopoly over the tea trade in the colonies. Colonists resisted this by refusing entry of "monopoly" ships into colonial ports, and they destroyed the cargo of

one such ship that had docked at Boston by staging the Boston Tea Party in 1773.

4. Angered at these developments, the British passed a series of Acts of Parliament (called the Intolerable Acts by the colonists) designed to punish Boston and the Massachusetts colony. These included revoking self-government, closing the port of Boston, and forcibly quartering troops in people's homes. In effect, Boston was occupied and put under martial law, and steps were taken to reorganize the Massachusetts government.
5. In turn, the British actions alarmed the colonists, leading them to establish the First Continental Congress in 1774 to discuss how to respond to the developing crisis and to arrange for the 13 colonies to act as a united group. Talks continued at the Second Continental Congress held in 1775, culminating in decisions to organize resistance to Parliament's actions and to petition the king for repeal of measures viewed as tyrannical, especially the "Intolerable Acts" directed against Boston and Massachusetts.

Revolution and Independence

1. Attempts to work out a peaceful settlement failed. The king ignored the colonists' petition, sent more troops, and announced further restrictions. In the colonies, verbal resistance spilled over into armed conflicts, including battles at Lexington, Concord, and Bunker Hill.
2. Giving up on attempts to compromise, the Congress accepted a motion to declare independence on July 2, 1776 and issued the Declaration of Independence two days later. In the process of listing grievances against England that justified the declaration, the document put forth some important basic principles concerning human rights that governments ought to respect and also identified actions that governments ought not to take. Many of these reflected the colonists' recent experiences with the king and the Parliament.
3. The declaration meant war with England. The colonies established themselves as a federation through the Articles of Confederation, recruited George Washington to command the army, and began raising money to recruit, equip, and train soldiers.
4. The colonists were fighting the world's foremost military power, but several factors worked in their favor that enabled them to prevail in the end. England was involved in empire building and armed conflict all over the world, so it could allocate only limited resources to the conflict in America.

England had to ship soldiers thousands of miles away to the colonies, but the colonists were fighting on their home ground. England's enemies, most notably France, helped the colonies by sending needed materials and in some cases military assistance. Finally, there was considerable division of opinion in England about the war against the colonies, so that governmental leaders were less eager to pursue it and more willing to conclude a peace agreement than they might have been otherwise.

5. For the most part, the war involved relatively small battles between relatively small armies, nothing like what occurred later in the Civil War. Early battles were mostly in New England and New York, and were mostly inconclusive or won by the British. Later battles were mostly fought farther south, and more often won by the colonists. Hostilities climaxed with a major American victory at Yorktown in 1781, and the war ended after a long period of peace negotiations was concluded in 1783.
6. The united colonies were now an independent nation. The new nation still operated under the Articles of Confederation at first, but this form of federal government proved to be too weak to be effective and was soon replaced by the U.S. Constitution. (These events will be the focus of the next unit.)

Possible Activities

The nature of the content (history) and the students' lack of background knowledge limits opportunities for experiential learning or independent inquiry (except for research assignments based on textbook or encyclopedia accounts of the Revolution or biographies of Revolutionary figures). However, students can use teacher-provided summaries of key information items or historically based children's literature selections as a basis for dramatic reenactments, debates, simulations, or writing assignments that involve taking the role of an individual who was involved in some way in the Revolution. Representative activities include the following:

1. Have students pretend to be journalists or pamphleteers writing about the Boston Massacre or the Boston Tea Party. Have some individuals or groups pretend to be Sam Adams or another colonist seeking to foment rebellion, others pretend to be newspaper reporters seeking to write neutral or balanced accounts, and still others pretend to be Tories dismayed by unjustified defiance of legitimate authority.
2. Have the class simulate a town meeting (or a Continental Congress meeting) called to decide whether,

and if so how, the group should support the people of Boston in resisting the Intolerable Acts.

3. Simulate a debate or trial concerning whether or not the American Revolution was justified. Include arguments or testimony by King George and other defenders of the view that British actions prior to the Revolution were not only consistent with established laws and customs but reasonable and respectful of the colonists' concerns, as well as by Tom Paine and other defenders of the view that the colonists were justified in breaking away from England to form an independent nation.
4. Have small groups of students simulate family discussions of whether or not the father or one of the sons should join the Continental Army. Assign different geographical locations and life circumstances to different groups (a Boston shop owner, a Massachusetts farmer, a farmer in rural Pennsylvania, a plantation owner in Georgia, or a former slave now living in New York City).
5. Have students pretend to be citizens of Boston beginning to get caught up in the events preceding the Revolution, discussing among family members or writing to friends elsewhere about their experiences and how they might respond to them (a family forced to quarter British troops, a family whose son threw a rock at British troops and barely escaped when they gave chase, a Tory family trying to decide what it will do if conflict with England continues to escalate, or formerly close friends who find that disagreement over political issues is ruining their friendship).

Other possible activities for this unit include the following:

1. Map activities highlighting key items of information such as the role of the Appalachians as a barrier to westward expansion of the colonies; the long distances and travel times between the colonies and England and between the northern and southern colonies (which created delays of weeks or months in communications); and the locations of major cities and battle sites.
2. Essays or class presentations on why we celebrate the Fourth of July.
3. Discussions or class presentations focusing on comparison and contrast between the issues that led the colonies to declare independence from England and the issues involved in more recent struggles for independence (satellite nations versus the U.S.S.R. prior to its break up; former component nations within the U.S.S.R. versus Russia since the break up; Quebec).

Print Resources for Potential Use in This Unit

- Avi: *The Fighting Ground*.
 James Lincoln Collier and Christopher Collier: *War Comes to Willy Freeman*.
 Ingri and Edgar Peres D' Aulaire: *George Washington*.
 Sally Edwards: *When the World's on Fire*.
 Esther Forbes: *Johnny Tremain*.
 Jean Fritz: *Where was Patrick Henry on May 29th; Can't You Make Them Behave, King George?; Will you Sign Here, John Hancock?; Why Don't you Get a Horse, Sam Adams?; And Then What Happened, Paul Revere?; What's the Big Idea, Ben Franklin?; Shh! We're Writing the Constitution*.
 Robert Lawson: *Ben & Me; Mr. Revere & I*.
 Elizabeth Levy: *If You were There When they Signed the Constitution*.
 Ann McGovern: *If You Lived in Colonial Times*.
 Scott O'Dell: *Sarah Bishop*.
 Edwin Tunis: *Colonial Living*.
 Cobblestone magazine (issues dealing with the Revolutionary period).

Internet Resources for Potential Use in This Unit

- <http://www.pbs.org/ktca/liberty/teachers.html>
<http://thematicunits.theteacherscorner.net/revolutionary-war.php>

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- Crabtree, C., Nash, B., Gagnon, P., & Waugh, S. (Eds.). (1992). *Lessons from history: Essential understandings and historical perspectives students should acquire*. Los Angeles: National Center for History in the Schools, University of California, Los Angeles.
- McBee, T., Tate, D., & Wagner, L. (1985). *U.S. history. Book 1: Beginnings to 1865*. Dubuque: William C. Brown.
- McKeown, M., & Beck, I. (1990). The assessment and characterization of young learners' knowledge of a topic in history. *American Educational Research Journal*, 27, 688-726.
- VanSledright, B., Brophy, J., & Bredin, N. (1993). *Fifth-graders' ideas about the American Revolution expressed before and after studying it within a U.S. history course*. (Elementary Subjects Center Series No. 81). East Lansing: Center for the Learning and Teaching of Elementary Subjects, Michigan State University.



A RESOURCE UNIT ON MOUNTAINS

Resource units are very useful for developing teaching units. They describe the intellectual substance, learning goals, and big ideas that can inform the teaching units. They also suggest possible activities for the teaching units, readings for teachers to use in developing the teaching units, and related readings for children to use in the teaching units. This resource unit focuses on regions, one of the five themes of geography. Regions include selected criteria such as landforms, types of vegetation, climate, and so forth. We have selected mountains as one of the types of physical features to use as an example. It serves to illustrate the possibilities of combining the physical and social aspects of geography built around big ideas from the field. The resource unit could serve as a springboard for your planning, giving balanced attention to the five themes.

Understanding of regions sharpens appreciation for the diversity that exists in human activities and cultures and the ways different groups of people interact within regional contexts.

GOALS

- *Help students to understand the nature of mountains, the physical environments that they create, and the advantages and limitations that these environments pose for human activities.*
- *Help students to learn about mountain regions in the United States, especially those in which they live or which have noteworthy connections to the region in which they live.*
- *Engage students in personal and civic decision making related to the nation's mountain regions.*

KEY IDEAS TO BE DEVELOPED

The Physical Geography of Mountain Regions

1. Mountains are not just hills but very high elevations of land. Define mountains in terms of distance from sea level and compare them with plains that are mostly within a few hundred feet of sea level. (Show and explain relief maps and schematic diagrams that name and illustrate the landforms found between sea level and the highest mountains.)
2. Mountains were not "just always there." They were formed by movements of the earth's surface plates or by volcanic activity erupting from below the surface. Three major causal mechanisms have been identified: (1) two surface plates clash directly and force each other upwards at the point of contact (as when you push two clay pancakes together on a tabletop). This process created most of the major mountain ranges that feature high and sharp peaks. (2) Two plates come together, but instead of a direct clash, the edge of one plate slips over the edge of the other, which slips under. This creates more rounded ranges, high enough to be considered mountains but not among the highest peaks on earth. (3) Volcanoes cause upward bulging of the earth while they are still underground, and once they begin erupting above the ground they expel lava (sometimes millions of tons) that can build up to mountainous proportions over the centuries.
3. Although there are isolated peaks (mostly volcanoes), most mountains are parts of ranges (study the globe or sets of maps to locate and discuss

the world's major mountain ranges, especially those that form the "spine" of the Americas).

4. Physical environments (and the ecologies that they are capable of supporting) change as one moves from sea level toward higher elevations. In general, as one continues to move higher, the climate becomes colder and there is less variety in plants and animals. Most plants and animals (and people) are found at low elevations that feature relatively warm climates, flat land, and rich soil. As one begins to ascend, the climate cools, the land is mostly sloped, and the soil becomes rockier. It becomes harder for people to grow crops and for animals to find food. If the mountain is high enough, one eventually will reach a tree line beyond which trees no longer grow. These elevations still support bushes and wildflowers that can survive without rich soil or a warm climate, and animals such as bears, mountain lions, marmots, and mountain goats that have adapted to the rough terrain and forbidding climate. Still higher up, there is only rock, sometimes covered in part by snow (or even glaciers). Only species such as lichen and insects, and perhaps a few wildflowers and marmots, can survive in this environment.
5. Prevailing winds blowing into a mountain range create weather patterns that may affect entire regions. The mountain range interrupts the flow of clouds and moist air, turning it back on itself and building up the air's moisture content until it forms precipitation. As a result, there is frequent rain or snow on the windward side of the mountain range but dry, even desert conditions on the leeward side (illustrate using diagrams taken from textbooks). This is why the northwest coast of the United States has a wet climate but the Great Basin east of the mountains is very dry (refer to globe or maps to elaborate on this and other examples of mountains' effects on weather and climate, especially effects on the local region).

People and Mountains

1. In the past, people who did not live in mountain areas tended to view them as forbidding and unpleasant places to be avoided if possible. Prior to modern paved roads and motor-driven vehicles, mountain ranges were significant barriers to trade and travel, as well as significant protection against invasion. Heavy snows often meant that even passes through the mountains were open only

during the warmer months. Even then, they were difficult to negotiate because the roads were often sloped. In many places, one could easily slip off the road and either tumble down a steep slope and get hurt or fall off a cliff and get killed. Mountain ranges were significant barriers to westward migration during the pioneer days when people used horses and wagons to cross over the Appalachians into the Midwest, and later to cross the Rockies and the Sierras in the West.

2. Even then, though, some people lived in the mountains. Usually they lived not on the peaks but in valleys between ranges or in flat areas such as Jackson Hole that lay between surrounding mountains. Some forms of farming and animal grazing were possible in these areas, supplemented by hunting and fishing in the mountains (perhaps embellish here with books or videos on nineteenth-century "mountain men" or other people who have managed to live in mountain areas without benefit of modern housing and transportation).
3. Most mountain regions were (and still are) sparsely populated. However, towns developed in a few places because they became centers for local industry (typically mining or lumbering operations) or transportation hubs (they were located at a key crossroads or served as the point of departure into a major mountain pass).
4. Today, mountain regions are much less isolated than they used to be, and people can drive through them, using modern roads that snake their way around mountains (and sometimes tunnels that go through them). People in our country have good access to the Appalachians, the Ozarks, the Rockies, and the Sierra Nevada ranges by car or train. They also can fly to these areas and to remote areas in Alaska and Hawaii. Many people take advantage of these opportunities: Instead of thinking of mountain regions as unpleasant places to be avoided, most modern people think of them as attractive places to visit to enjoy scenic vistas, hike in national parks, fish in mountain streams, go skiing or mountain climbing, or visit art colonies, historic places, or other tourist attractions. Europeans enjoy visiting the Alps for similar reasons.
5. Even today, however, certain mountain regions are still formidable barriers to travel by land and certain mountain communities are still quite isolated. This is especially true of the Himalayan range and the nations of Nepal and Tibet, as well as various mountain regions in Indonesia and South America.

6. Even in our country and in the Alps, heavy snows and bitter cold make it impossible (or even if possible, economically unfeasible) to keep certain roads or mountain passes open in the winter. Except for ski resorts, mountain communities and national parks that host a great many visitors in the warmer months do not see many outsiders in the colder months.
 7. Mountain regions are not heavily populated even today. A major exception is Mexico City—the largest city in the world—that is located in a “bowl” high in the mountains of central Mexico. There are also a few large cities in mountain areas of the United States that have grown because they are regional marketing and service centers, most notably Denver. However, even the cities in mountain areas tend to be small, and most mountain communities exist for the same economic reasons as in the past (principally mining, lumbering, and cattle or sheep ranching). The major recent addition is tourism, notable in ski resorts (Aspen, Park City, and so forth) or tourism in towns located near national parks or other places of natural beauty (Jackson Hole, Lake Tahoe).
 8. Large cities in mountain regions often suffer from cost-of-living and quality-of-life problems. Food and manufactured items often cost more because they have to be shipped greater distances to remote mountain locations. Local geographic factors sometimes create air inversions or other conditions that limit air flow and thus magnify air pollution problems. Mexico City has a terrible environmental problem and Denver is developing one.
 9. Even though they are sparsely populated, mountain regions make important contributions to our national productivity and quality of life. In some areas, runoff from mountain rain and snow is collected in reservoirs and used to provide vital water supplies, not only for drinking but for irrigation of lands that otherwise would not support farming. The rich central valley of California is irrigated in this way. Mountain regions also supply significant proportions of the nation’s lumber and minerals, including some vital minerals that are not found anywhere else in the nation.
- areas (shortness of breath accompanies physical exertion at high elevations; dry air on the lee side, the side of the mountain not exposed to the elements, of mountains can lead to dehydration and skin irritation problems; daytime and nighttime temperatures may be much more variable).
2. Along with people who exploit the natural resources found in mountain regions, some people make a living in these regions through occupations that require specialized skills more than abundant raw materials. Many people living in villages in the Swiss Alps make watches or cuckoo clocks. In our country, some people living in mountain communities are artists or crafts workers who make specialized goods.
 3. In many parts of the world, farmers cope with sloped land by reshaping it into series of step-like terraces so that soil and water are prevented from running down the slope.
 4. People in mountain areas have learned to construct houses to maximize exposure to the sun, minimize exposure to wind, and cause snow to slide off of their roofs and pile up against the house so as to provide insulation.
 5. Mountain climbers using special equipment have scaled many of the world’s highest peaks, including Mount Everest.
 6. There are active volcanoes in our country, including many in Hawaii and Mount St. Helens in Washington (you might wish to develop a lesson on volcanoes if your curriculum treats this topic as part of social studies and rather than science).
 7. Many of our highest mountain regions have been reserved as national parks (perhaps show photos or videos from some of these).
 8. Some mountain ranges stretch along coast lines (most notably in western North and South America). Often this creates favorable conditions for the development of communities along the coast. Travel between coastal communities is usually easy by land or water, but these communities may be isolated from inland communities on the other side of the mountain range. Some communities in places like Alaska and Chile are accessible only by air or sea.

Additional Ideas Suggested for Optional Inclusion

1. Humans accustomed to living at lower elevations need to adapt when they visit or move to mountain

Possible Activities

1. Start the unit with a story from children’s literature about mountain living or with brainstorming about what it is like to live in the mountains.

2. Read children's books or show videos about mountain life in the past and perhaps today in Switzerland or Nepal.
3. Engage students in a research project on how the local area is affected by mountains or interdependent with mountain regions. Even if located at great distance from a mountain range, your area probably has some connections via climate and weather patterns, importing of raw materials, visiting of national parks or ski resorts, and so forth.
4. Study changes over time in the economy/population of a particular mountain region or community (especially if local).
5. Study and discuss travel brochures or videos that feature tourist options in mountain regions. Invite students to show and tell about vacation trips or other family experiences in mountain regions.
6. Discuss policy issues relating to mountain regions (air and water quality, land and water use, and so forth).
7. Have students discuss or write about the trade-offs involved in living in mountain regions, then explain why they would or would not want to live there (or, alternatively, why they would want to visit or move to Denver, Aspen, Lake Tahoe, the Blue Ridge, or some other specific location).

Print Resources for Potential Use in This Unit

Legrand Cannon, *Look to the Mountain*.

Jean Craighead George, *My Side of the Mountain*.

Jean Craighead, *On the Far Side of the Mountain*.

Cynthia Rylant, *When I was Young in the Mountains*.

Ken Slone, *Mountain Teacher*.

Kathleen Zoehfeld, *How Mountains are Made*.

Internet Resources for Potential Use in This Unit

<http://www.envirolink.org>

<http://www.primaryresources.co.uk/geography/geography.htm>

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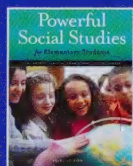
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